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IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY: THE IMPACT OF THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PROVIDER ON BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

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IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY: THE IMPACT OF THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PROVIDER ON BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

by

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Treatise

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2018

Dedication

To my lifelong mentor, Mary Alice Deike, for without you there would be no study.

You have guided me through some of the toughest years of my life and have shown me what true professionalism coupled with grace look like in action. You have no idea how widespread your influence is, as each of us are better educational leaders because of you. I speak for many, and myself, when I say that for all of us who have had the pleasure to know and work with you, we are eternally grateful.

Acknowledgements

To complete a doctorate degree takes a supportive network of family and friends, and I am eternally grateful to the countless number of people that have guided me through this journey. I would first and, most importantly, like to thank my best friend and "bebe" sister, Grace Baranowski. Mary Alice may have inspired this study, but you carried and supported me every step of the way. Without your love and constant guidance, I would still be stuck on chapter one. You never stopped believing in me and what I was capable of accomplishing.

Thank you to everyone in the CSP 23 cohort for your amazing support and friendship on this journey. I always felt fortunate to be surrounded by such an experienced cadre of educational leaders and I appreciate you for always making me feel included. Thank you Shirley, for being the yin to my yang, and always answering the phone. I have learned so much from each of you and I look forward to connecting with each of you in the future.

Thank you also to my campus, and Del Valle ISD, for supporting me through my classwork and for being flexible with my schedule. With so many wonderful students, teachers, and district leaders, I've gained knowledge in the past six years that I will carry with me throughout my career. Gaining a passion for school improvement has given me the impetus to continue to support building capacity in future school leaders.

A very special tribute to the members of my committee, Dr. Olivárez, Dr. Cantu, Dr. Green, and Dr. Villerot. I appreciate the time you spent reading my work and providing feedback. Dr. O, you truly went above and beyond supporting me throughout the program. To this day I feel so blessed to have been selected to CSP 23 and I thank you for seeing potential in me. I will now relentlessly "charge on" as I pursue my educational career goals.

Finally, I wish to express my love and appreciation to my mom, dad, and family. From day one, you have always supported and encouraged me to know that I could succeed at anything I put my mind to. Without you molding me into the woman I am, this doctorate would not have been possible.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY:

THE IMPACT OF THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PROVIDER ON BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2018

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The role of the campus principal has presented enormous and escalating challenges with the ever-increasing demands of academic accountability coupled with public scrutiny in the era of accountability that only continues to heighten with the new accountability rating system. Expecting swift and dramatic improvements overnight, tensions within the improvement required (IR) school organization tend to be evident, as principals are ill-equipped to transform a campus under local and state mandates. Building organizational capacity in schools with exacerbated achievement gaps among diverse student groups requires effective principal leadership.

This study examined the role of the external Professional Service Provider coach within the context of improving school achievement through principal and campus capacity building. The multiple-case qualitative study employed data collected through semi-structured interviews, documents related to the study, and field notes. Data were subjected to several levels of descriptive analysis, whereby the emerging categories became the basis for organization and conceptualization of the data.

Findings identified that principals of schools identified as improvement required benefited from working with an external coach. All schools noted the value in the PSP working to grow not only their skillset, but rather, the skillset of the entire leadership team. This approach allowed for a greater amount of whole school buy in, as a wide scope of people were coached either directly by the PSP, or by a leader on the campus. The consistency in the data showed IR campuses were found without steady, school wide systems and lacked a sense of focus. With the PSP, leadership teams were able to narrow their focus and establish systems that would sustain the passage of time. While the difference in expertise level was addressed as a major factor when selecting a PSP, no one was aware on a clear plan for improving the training provided to these coaches. Data varied on the amount of support and knowledge that was provided by the district office. This study illuminated the need for principal coaching through the use of an experienced external coach to support the growth of an improvement required school toward academic success.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Over 15 years after the release of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, the urgency for school districts to launch initiatives that produce demonstrable gains in academic achievement for all students is still a reality (Datnow & Honig, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Districts across the United States are fraught with inequalities between student groups in academic achievement and teachers' low expectations preventing students from becoming college or career ready; which has led to the current educational attainment predicament (Apple & Beane, 2007; Noguera, 2005; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Wagner, 2008; Wagner et al., 2006). In the 2005-2006 school year under NCLB, 12% of all U.S. schools were identified as needing improvement (Stullich, Eisner, & McCrary, 2007). One quarter of those identified campuses had a history of failing to meet state standards for 4 to 6 years. Chronically low-performing campuses have been forced to grapple with how to meet the reality of where to begin in school turnaround efforts (Duke, 2010).

"High stakes accountability, school reconstitution and closings, charter and voucher schools, and similar attempts at restructuring or privatization do not engage directly with critical tasks of building organizational capacity in low-performing schools" (King & Bouchard, 2011, p. 653). Proposals for reform are often times about something other than improving public education and are void of strategies to promote organizational learning to build a school's capacity (Apple, 2006). Superintendents and central office leaders now, more than ever, are realizing they have a vital role in focusing on educational improvement strategies centered on learning-focused leadership (Datnow & Honig, 2008).

Marzano's (2009) meta-analysis of school district leadership found a statistically significant correlation between district leadership and student achievement. Schools are under

intense scrutiny as the focus lies on how principals can influence improvements under complex social, political, and economic conditions (Leithwood & Reihl, 2003). Crow, Hausman, and Paredes (2002) stressed that principals are pivotal to enacting all school reform efforts. However, with the evolution of the standards movement intensifying across the nation, district and campus administrators found that "effective leadership was impossible when everything was considered a high priority" (Duke, 2010, p. 2). While the ideology of school improvement has been long standing, the rate of actual success has not kept pace with state and federal directives. This inability to move at a quick enough speed leads to the realization that campus principals prioritize and enact change efforts in silos (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006).

Understanding that the role of the campus principal is an isolated one, many urban districts establish partnerships with external organizations to support district-wide teaching and learning improvement efforts (Honig, 2004). Calling on intermediaries to enhance campus and district capacity under increasing pressure, "school reformers have employed external, school-based coaches to support learning, performance, and change among principal, staff, and teachers" (Mayer, Grenier, Warhol, & Donaldson, 2013, p. 338). With the promise of bringing a multitude of new resources beyond the scope of what districts and campuses could do on their own, external school-based coaches have been supporting schools over the past two decades enhancing organizational effectiveness and instructional quality (Elmore & Burney, 1997; Mayer et al., 2013; Neufield & Roper, 2002).

In order to provide support to principals in low-performing schools, some states and local districts across the nation have adopted the external coach model. These specialized support professionals with extensive experience in school improvement are recruited and trained to provide technical assistance to schools and principals (Stickel, 2005). In Texas, these school

liaisons, known as professional service providers (PSP), specialize in principal coaching and in leveraging effective campus practices within a framework for improving student performance at low performing campuses (PSP Guidebook, 2013). School turnaround leadership, utilizing the PSP model, creates a partnership in articulating the focus for change and first steps for turning around the campus.

PSPs are integral to the organizational change process and positioned to impact campuses beyond meeting mere accountability requirements by establishing embedded and long-lasting systemic change, because without the aid of an intermediary or expert PSP "very few organizations can develop and master the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed" (D'Aveni, 1994, p. 383). PSPs have the opportunity to build the capacity of campus and district leaders for understanding and fully implementing the continuous improvement model of school turnaround (PSP Job Description, 2015). The following sections provide a general overview of the study, a description of the problem this study will address, the research questions, and a brief summary of the methodology. Terms used in the study are also defined, as is the significance of the investigation, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions.

Background of the Study

The role of the campus principal, post NCLB, has presented enormous and escalating challenges with the ever-increasing demands of academic accountability coupled with public scrutiny (NCLB, 2002). Expecting swift and dramatic improvements overnight, tensions within the school organization are evident, as principals are ill equipped to transform a campus under local and state mandates (Reiss, 2004; Sparks, 2005). Amplified by having to learn a completely new set of skills for the campuses they lead, principals are weighed down by improvement frameworks that leave them little time to focus in on the long-term effects of building capacity

among their faculty to bring about changes in instructional quality and student achievement (King & Bouchard, 2011). King and Bouchard (2011) noted the following

> Efforts to build leadership and instructional capacity have tended to be short term; approaches for quick fixes and "reforms du jour" do not lead to powerful sustainable improvements that impact student achievement and achievement gaps. And the reliance on external accountability systems and mandates to do the "checklist" of research-based practices have only limited success in leading to powerful, sustainable reforms. (p. 660)

School district leaders working with low performing campuses must look beyond traditional methods and launch new initiatives to strengthen school building capacity in the effort to promote teaching and learning (Datnow & Honig, 2008).

Fullan (2007) focused on the dilemma of the need for different leadership strategies for different circumstances and argued, "the need for external intervention is inversely proportional to how well the school is progressing. In the case of persistent failure, dramatic, assertive leadership and external intervention appear to be necessary" (p. 46). Despite undergoing district-wide school improvement initiatives, urban school districts have found themselves facing challenges in implementation. A lack of clarity among leaders regarding learning goals and an absence of enough qualified and stable staff to foster new change efforts are common obstacles faced by campus administrators (Corcoran, Fuhrman, & Belcher 2001; Hubbard et al., 2006). Kouzes and Pozner (2007) promoted site leadership coaching as an investment in campus administrators to provide a framework for building capacity campus-wide and to fill the need for long overdue job-embedded, focused, and relevant professional development.

Professional Service Providers in the Coaching Role

The need for on the job principal training for administrators that find themselves on low performing campuses is more important now than ever before (James-Ward, 2011). One recommendation being made for schools and districts across the nation not meeting state targets for annual student growth is to support principals at these low performing schools with leadership coaches (Stickel, 2005). Professional service providers (PSP), as external liaisons to schools, are coaches who work with IR campuses to provide technical assistance and campus-wide support to directly impact accountability. PSPs offer tools to help school leaders accelerate student learning and provide professional development to principals needing to engage in school improvement and reform. These coaches promote a systematic approach to continuous learning on individual campuses immersed in turnaround efforts (James-Ward, 2011). PSPs are able to serve as third parties throughout the challenging work of school improvement as they are able to incorporate their knowledge base into organizational structures and communication systems that bridge the collaborative work between the struggling campus and the district (Honig & Ikemoto, 2008).

Coaching as a professional development and school improvement strategy within the field of education has shown considerable growth within the past decade (Elmore & Burney, 1997; King & Bouchard, 2011; Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2010; Neufield & Roper, 2002, 2003). However, according to Neufeld and Donaldson (2012), research on coaching in educational settings is scant and what is available focuses on internal coaches of instruction and literacy. Seeking to improve and accelerate learning for school leaders, external coaching models need further investigation to learn best practices for cultivating skills and equipping novice and veteran principals for the challenges of turning around low-performing schools.

Statement of the Problem

As evidenced by continued low performance among many schools throughout school districts across the nation, principals struggle to transform low performing campuses into high-performing, high-achieving ones (Meddaugh, 2014). Building organizational capacity in schools with exacerbated achievement gaps among diverse student groups requires effective principal leadership (King & Bouchard, 2011). Multiple studies have investigated the connection between the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal and student achievement (Elmore, 2000; Leithwood & Reihl, 2003). Under unwaveringly high stakes, it is paramount to strengthen the leadership practices of the principal as an extension to improve teaching and learning (Hess & Kelly, 2005).

Depending on the quality of their leadership, principals can impact capacity building in positive or negative ways (King & Bouchard, 2011). Hence, the critical importance of building school capacity requiring a framework that centers on distributed forms of leadership emanating from the knowledge and skills of the campus principal (Camburn et al., 2003, Elmore, 2000; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Under such pressure, how do principals go about the craft of building on their instructional knowledge and improving the quality of their leadership? Though various systems of support and professional development exist for teachers, there is a void in regard to the same opportunities for novice and experienced principals alike. School administrators are forced to rely on one-size-fits-all training events as part of their continued leadership development efforts (Bossi, 2007).

"A business world maxim holds that 'every organization is perfectly structured to get the results that it gets'. A corollary is that substantially different results require organizational redesign, not just incentives for staff to try harder within traditional constraints" (Darling-

Hammond, 2010, p. 237). External leadership coaching for principals is an outside-the-box answer to the considerable pressures faced by campus leaders to meet the demanding mandates of school accountability (James-Ward, 2011). Cooperatively supporting principals through the continuous learning cycle, coaches working with principals at underperforming campuses establish professional relationships, with a deliberate personalized plan, to provide leaders with objective information in order to make decisions that will lead to creating and sustaining systemic processes, increasing student achievement (Bloom et al., 2005; Killion, 2002; Reiss, 2007).

According to Smylie and Corcoran (2006), though impactful on campuses, external coaches vary in their ability to help. With a myriad of internal and external factors, their work could bolster or impede the improvement process and, in turn, dismantle the very system they aim to support and provide to a campus (Datnow & Honig, 2008). The external support provided by the coach is impacted by the interactions with teachers, administrators, district personnel, and others in complex ways that change throughout the duration of the relationship. Success is not just dependent on the coaches themselves but on all with whom they engage and work with (Datnow, Hubbard, & Mehan, 2002; Honig, 2004).

"Limited qualitative research exists on how coaches actually leverage their knowledge, skills, and experience to build the capacity of principals to lead systematic instructional improvements and turn around underperforming schools" (Meddaugh, 2014, p. 149). Studies specifically aimed at investigating the role of external coaches to improve schools are a rare and underdeveloped body of knowledge (King & Bouchard, 2011; Mayer et al., 2013). The complexities of how external coaches operate, the impact of their work, and the conditions that help or hinder them in their efforts has only just begun to be tapped (Datnow & Honig, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The focus of this research extends beyond instructional leadership by bringing the role of external coach and principal into full light by understanding the organizational, political, institutional, and other factors that shape the work of principal coaching on low-performing campuses. According to Datnow and Honig (2008), as a coherent system for supporting principals and impacting systemic and sustained change, it is important to discover how the work of external coaches is organized, the collaboration techniques used with principals, and the barriers and facilitators of producing changes in teaching and learning. These factors exemplify the direct connection between the goal of this study, examining the role of the external or PSP coach within the context of improving school achievement through principal and campus capacity building. Through the analysis of information obtained from the perceptions of campus principals and PSPs at IR campuses, this research will examine the factors that impact school improvement as identified through the Texas Accountability Intervention System's (TAIS) critical success factors (CSF) model.

Research Questions

This research study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How and in what ways do principal and PSP relationships impact school-wide capacity building?
2. Given the principal-PSP relationship, to what extent was student achievement impacted.

Overview of Methodology

The study will be a multiple-case study of elementary principals and PSPs working together at IR campuses in Texas. The researcher will use a grounded theory approach to examine the implementation of the TAIS's PSP model for building leadership capacity (Glaser &

Strauss, 1967). Data from semi-structured interviews with three separate principal-PSP pairs will be suitable for the grounded theory approach and "understanding the action in a substantive area from the point of view of the actors involved" (Glaser, 1998, p. 115). The study's intent will be to move beyond a description of a phenomenon as part of the generation of a theory of actions that may be revealed through the constant comparative analysis of data provided by the very individuals experiencing the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Case study design is appropriate and concerned with human experiences that are specifically derived from the people participating in the study (Creswell, 2003). According to Creswell (2007), case study allows for the exploration of a case or phenomenon bound by time and activity. Principal-PSP pairs in the same district will offer data for the exploration of the phenomenon of principal coaching through the lens of external support systems. Stakeholders can offer descriptive accounts about how specific PSP practices affect capacity building in principals of IR campuses (Stake, 2006).

Participants for this study will be selected through purposeful sampling and will have been engaged in the TAIS PSP model on IR campuses (Merriam, 2009). Additional data sources to the semi-structured interviews will include field notes and accountability documents. Constant comparative analysis of all qualitative data will be performed and open, axial, and selective coding processes will inform final analysis of the results (Mertens, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morse & Richards, 2002; Patton, 2002).

Definition of Terms

Capacity. A leader's knowledge, skills, behaviors, and time needed to manage and facilitate productive change.

Coaching. A core process defined as a collaborative relationship between the coach and coached with the intent of reaching professional or personal development outcomes.

Critical success factors. CSFs are foundational elements that are part of the TAIS framework that serve to guide the school improvement planning process for continuous improvement, these factors result in accelerated school achievement and are grounded in school improvement research.

Effective schools. body of knowledge focused on identifying schools with high populations of students from poverty where all students are performing at a higher than expected level has been labeled the Effective School Research.

External coaches. individuals working with principals and teachers to develop school capacity to improve student instruction and enhance student learning.

External organization. organizations sought out by districts or campuses to assist in district-wide teaching and learning efforts. Focused on bringing a host of new knowledge-based, social, fiscal, and other resources beyond what schools and districts would be able to do on their own.

Improvement required. Texas campuses that fail to meet state standard are identified as IR due to performance concerns for meeting accountability monitoring intervention goals. These campuses and districts must engage in improvement planning and continuous monitoring through the TAIS.

Instructional leadership. various strategies principals pursue to support and encourage high-quality teaching practices which, in turn, have a direct impact on student outcomes.

Leadership coaching. confidential and purposeful professional relationship designed to build leadership capacity and facilitate a leader in attaining breakthroughs and accomplishing

significant goals. A client-focused, client-driven, solution-focused/result-oriented, job-embedded professional development, which offers campus leaders the opportunity for non-judgmental customized support from a strategic thinking partner.

Learning support intermediary. function to mediate or manage change in at least two parties, operating between the top and bottom of the implementing system they bridge policy and practice and bring additional tools and resources to help build on school strengths.

Mentoring. A process in which a more skilled or experienced person, serving as a role model teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person by promoting their professional and/or personal development.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. NCLB was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] of 1965 signed into law in January of 2002 by President George W. Bush. NCLB required states to set standards for student performance and teacher quality, establishing accountability for results.

Professional service providers. PSPs are external liaisons in Texas that work with IR campuses to provide technical assistance, principal coaching, and campus-wide support to directly impact accountability.

Texas Accountability Intervention System. TAIS is a continuous improvement model for IR campuses in Texas that is focused on data analysis, needs assessments, and the development, implementation, and monitoring of a plan targeted to address low performing areas.

Undereducation. U.S. Department of Education (2011) reported that far too many students are still not getting access to the kinds of classes, resources, and opportunities they need to be successful and are, therefore, undereducated.

Limitations

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), one of the main limitations of qualitative research inquiry is the transferability and generalizability of findings to other cases. This particular study will include only principal-PSP pairs found on IR elementary campuses. Thus, it will be difficult to generalize the phenomenon, causal conditions, strategies, conditions and context, and consequences to all campus principals participating in the TAIS process with PSPs (Creswell, 2007).

Another limitation will be the potential for selective recall by study participants, as principals and PSPs will be interviewed after their participation in the TAIS improvement process. The participants may recall only specific events, experiences, or perceptions that could have been subject to memory alteration over time. The other specific concern with feedback on experiences from principals and PSPs involves the limitation of relying exclusively on individuals' perceptions. As perceptions of a personal experience could have subjectivity, the accounting of facts could limit accuracy in the interpretation of the data

Delimitations

The delimitations used by the researcher in this study will be bound by the desire to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between IR campus principals and PSPs within the context of capacity building. Therefore, this study will focus solely on elementary principals of schools designated as IR by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) due to these schools not meeting the state's academic performance standards. The campuses that these principals oversee will have been relegated to undergo the continuous improvement TAIS process with a designated PSP providing support and guidance.

Assumptions

This case study will proceed based on three assumptions. First, the participants in the study will provide honest and accurate feedback in their interviews regarding the experiences working in the TAIS improvement model. Second, the PSPs implement the TAIS framework with fidelity and utilize the CSFs to support leadership development. Finally, in regard to developing school building capacity, the principal will be recognized as critical to improving academic achievement at the IR school.

Significance

This study may provide valuable insight into how external support providers, PSPs, work together with campus principals and school staffs in the implementation of teaching and learning improvement initiatives under the pressures of high stakes accountability. By examining principal and PSP perceptions and experiences working together, a transition can be made in schools from dialogue and learning into action and implementation (Ellinger, Watkins, & Bostrom, 1999). The findings of this study may shed light on the symbiotic relationship that can occur, creating a value-add atmosphere for the entire campus through improved and sustainable systems (Mayer et al., 2013). All stakeholders involved in the school turnaround process can benefit from this body of work as an opportunity to cultivate and equip novice and veteran principals for the challenges of school reform (James-Ward, 2011). Findings from the study of PSPs entry plans and their effectiveness working with principals can be utilized to train and provide continuous learning to the entire PSP network to further support the schools they serve throughout the state. Understanding that the pairing of the PSP and principal is considered critical to IR turnaround, districts can use the data found here to reflect and provide a system to improve the selection and placement process of PSPs on high needs campuses.

Finally, the results of this study can further the much-needed research regarding how to "strengthen the capacity of district systems to realize ambitious teaching and learning improvement goals for all students" (Datnow & Honig, 2008, p. 323). This study expands the knowledge of the work of the external coaching model for principals and districts alike, and informs the field about how to build the capacity of the campus principal and support the infrastructure of school improvement. This study may offer new thinking into understanding the complex nature of school reform through the instructional leadership lens within the context of identifying gaps and critical points within the coaching model to uncover the driving and restraining forces of the accountability support system.

Summary

Education is at a point where schools are falling into the category of "improvement required" at a significant pace. As more schools find themselves in academic turmoil, more has to be done to successfully assist those school leaders. As the TAIS model is the external coaching model used in Texas, future research focusing on the experiences of the individual principal and PSPs may allow the external coaching model to be further developed. Looking through the lens of the principal and the PSP, an alternative view to capacity building can be broached to support leaders as they navigate campuses to improve accountability and overall student achievement. The remaining chapters provide a review of the literature, the methods used for completing the multiple case study, the findings, and the discussion and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The focus of this research extends beyond instructional leadership by bringing the role of external coach and principal into full light by understanding the organizational, political, institutional, and other factors that shape the work of principal coaching on low-performing campuses. Through the analysis of information obtained from the perceptions of campus principals and professional service providers (PSP) at improvement required (IR) campuses, this research will examine the factors that impact school improvement as identified through the Texas Accountability Intervention System's (TAIS) critical success factors (CSF) model. This chapter contains the review of the literature involving capacity building and principal leadership and associated barriers and facilitators of success. A comprehensive examination of the leadership coaching and the literature addressing leadership coaching for school accountability rounds out this chapter.

Building School Capacity and the Need for Principal Leadership

The Texas Education Agency reports that one out of every two campuses that fails to meet state accountability standards will continue to fail once state intervention system is reached (TEA Turnaround Framework, 2011). Current achievement inequalities across student groups reveal that reformers and policymakers are still missing the mark when it comes to what is best to achieve success for all students (King & Bouchard, 2011). Focusing on improving teaching and learning with innovative curricula, reformers assume that wide spread implementation will "just happen" one school at a time (Leithwood et al., 2004). Reforms become, to a large degree, about something other than public education and lack an overall awareness to promoting organizational learning and building a school's capacity (Apple, 2006).

Considerable attention must be given to organizational capacity in schools that find themselves with exacerbated achievement gaps (Chenowith, 2007). "The chance of any reform improving student learning is remote unless district and school leaders agree with its purposes and appreciate what is required to make it work" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 4). High-performing campuses understand the importance of building capacity and creating a culture of shared values, beliefs, and expectations focused on student learning and achievement (Peterson, 2002; Platt et al., 2008). Through inquiry, collaboration, and feedback, a community of learners can work to sustain a focus on students and professional growth (Lieberman, 1995; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Principals must understand that their role is to increase organizational capacity by sharing leadership throughout the school community with a common vision and cultivated trust, and that success is only achieved through the ability to leverage human capital (Apple, 2006).

Framework for School Capacity

As depicted in Figure 1, student achievement is affected most directly by instructional quality which, in turn, is influenced by school capacity. Figure 1 then expands to include the five dimensions of school capacity that each has the potential to affect one or more of the other dimensions. Professional development, at the base of the figure, is the foundational piece to contribute expertise to each of the five dimensions (Youngs & King, 2002). Based on a synthesis of prior research on school reform and educational change, the framework for school capacity that this review is organized around will focus on the direct and indirect relationship between principal leadership and overall student achievement (King & Bouchard, 2011).

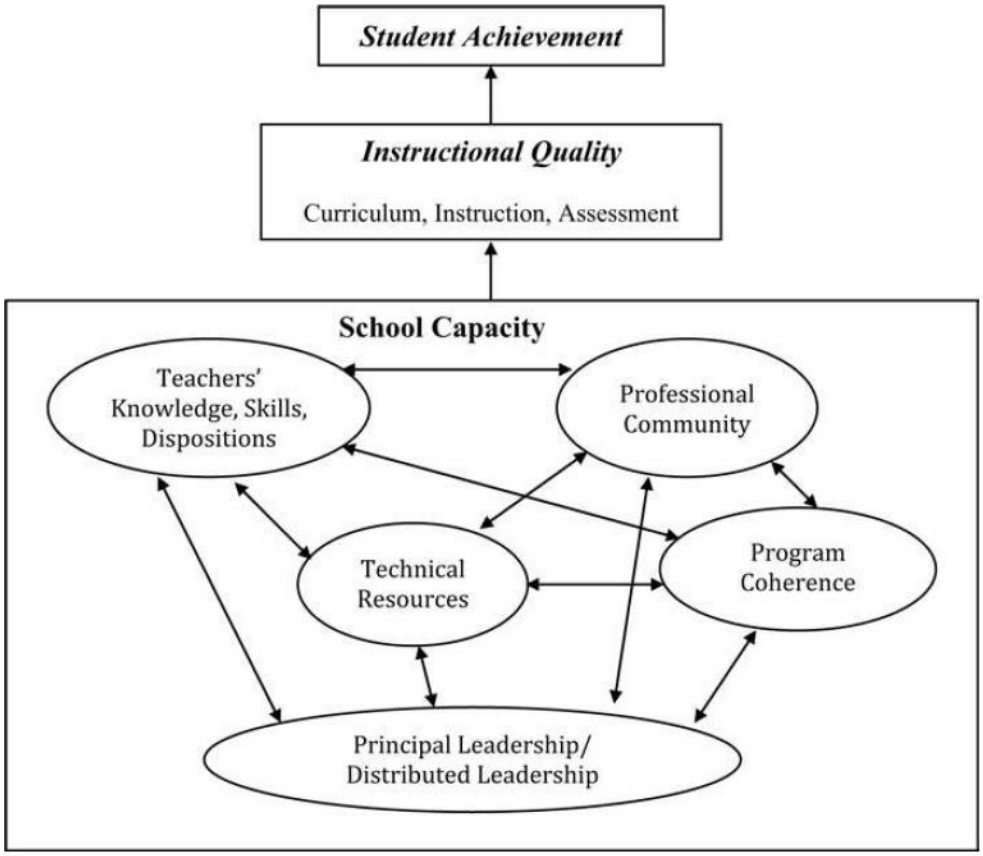

Figure 1. **School Capacity Framework** (Youngs & King, 2002).

Five dimensions of school capacity. Teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions are paramount when accounting for a school's capacity (Youngs & King, 2002). Professional competence in instruction, pedagogy, and assessment is necessary for effective classroom practices centered on high expectations. "The influence of individual teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions on student achievement is well recognized in the literature regarding teacher education and professional development" (King & Bouchard, 2011, p. 655).

Professional community affects school capacity as it focuses on shared goals for student learning and a collective responsibility to attain them. Collaboration and inquiry also represent organizational coherence as campus staff are allowed opportunities to exert influence over

initiatives, policies, and the overall school community (Youngs & King, 2002). Working together to provide alternative solutions to success, schools that have shown more developed professional communities are associated with higher student achievement (Lee & Smith, 1996; Louis & Marks, 1998).

The third dimension of school capacity, program coherence, is often referred to as organizational integration, as it factors in the extent to which programs are assimilated and sustained into school culture over time. Often times, schools initiate a multitude of unrelated programs that are void of clear learning goals. Leading to uncoordinated efforts, school programming can become fragmented and, in turn, weaken overall achievement (Smith, 2007).

Technical resources are the curricula and instructional materials that bolster student achievement. School capacity can be enhanced by reform efforts to provide opportunities for increased technology and higher quality physical facilities on campuses (Gamoran et al., 2000). Enhancing the quality of literature students are exposed to and a concerted effort to reform academic standards and assessments can positively and directly increase student achievement (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995; O'Day et al., 1995).

Principal leadership is the final dimension to affect the school capacity framework. Through collaboration with teacher leaders and staff, principals can have a direct effect on building capacity in others (Crowther et al., 2002). Particularly in schools serving low socio-economic students at higher risks for failure, high quality principal leadership is critical (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997). "Principals can enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions and other aspects of school capacity by connecting teachers to external expertise, by creating internal structures, and by establishing trusting relationships with school staff" (Youngs & King, 2002, p. 647). Rounding out the dimensions, principal leadership can only succeed

when the principal brings others into the organization in a shared, collaborative way (Leithwood et al., 2004).

In revisiting all five dimensions of the capacity framework, all are interactive and have the potential to affect one another in positive or negative ways. Teachers with exceptional pedagogical and curricular skills could impact the professional community by leading teams of teachers to develop cross-curricular lessons. On the other hand, a fragmented program could severely weaken goals established for students through the learning community. Each dimension has the potential to affect at least one or more of its counterparts. However, principal leadership has the capacity to affect all of the dimensions and can be a critical force in a positive or negative way, depending on leadership quality (Newman et al., 2000).

The role of professional development in building school capacity. In Figure 2.1, professional development is necessary in order to develop any dimensions of the school capacity framework. Each of the five dimensions can be directly impacted, in isolation or as a coherent unit, by professional development (Youngs & King, 2002). The challenge to bring about improvements to the overall quality and nature of programming would be met by targeting the dimension that in essence has the most "capacity" to bring about change in the others. Since principal leadership is the only dimension to directly affect all of the other four, a reasonable case could be made to focus more on that dimension. This statement is in line with "prior research indicating that even while principals may lack full control over their schools, they appear to have impressive influence over the extent to which professional development addresses all aspects of capacity" (Newmann et al., 2000, p. 283).

A wide array of professional development is provided to teachers and other campus staff; however, principals are not afforded the same opportunities due to a lack of awareness and

availability (Bossi, 2007). According to Bossi (2007), the trainings that are available are not tailored to meet the individual needs of novice and veteran principals. Realizing that the average school experiences changes in principals every three to four years, creating potential harm to student achievement due to the turnover, professional development must creatively work to build leader capacity (Mitgang et al., 2012). Understanding the enormous weight principal leadership carries to orchestrate change and distributed leadership, how is a system created to build the capacity of the principal and the infrastructure of school improvement within the urgency and demands of the position (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009)?

Barriers to Building Capacity in Principals

Based on a six-year study conducted by Seashore-Louis et al. (2010), leadership has the second greatest impact among all school-related factors as an influence on learning. "To date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership" (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010, p. 9). The leader sets the tone to impact teacher quality and is the key developer of organizational talent (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). School organizations mirror the actions and improvement efforts of their leaders and "effective" or "successful" leadership is paramount to school reform (Mitgang et al., 2012). Understanding the role of the principal as critical to increased student achievement and sustained success, what are the barriers that prevent this from occurring, especially on campuses that have the greatest challenges?

Bureaucratic Nature of the Principalship

A principal's leadership responsibilities have historically mirrored the conventional, bureaucratic nature of school and district organizations (King & Bouchard, 2011). Focusing on administrative matters over instructional ones, principals see themselves as middle managers,

translating policy from the district office to the classroom. Little has changed in the almost thirty years following Cuban's (1988) concerns over the nature of the principalship as the managerial and political aspects dominated daily tasks forcing instructional focus to fall to the wayside. The bureaucratic nature of school systems, focused on compliance-based approaches has limited the creativity, freedom, and initiative of the campus principal (Murphy & Meyers, 2008).

"Standard operating procedures, hierarchy, rigid structures, and adherence to well-established work routines do not serve firms well in addressing problems, tending to reinforce the status quo and pigeonhole challenges into compliance efforts that do little to disturb conditions which helped create the problems in the first place" (King & Bouchard, 2011, p. 657). Hampering school turnaround efforts, the bureaucracy that principals are forced to navigate make it difficult to cultivate an atmosphere that promotes capacity building and distributed leadership (Bryk et al., 2010). Creating a learning community for all, principals must look past the traditional, top-down approaches to leadership and collaboratively search for novel solutions to campus improvement efforts (Clegg et al., 2005).

The urgency of budgets, administrative, and day-to-day issues on campuses often keep principals from focusing on the critical instructional issues faced by low-performing campuses (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). Principals want to be the "instructional leaders" they know they need to be but find themselves constrained by time and the complex nature of the job (Jacobson, 2010). However, as principals search for creative ways to address instruction and optimize conditions for learning, they must capitalize on building the capacity of teachers (Gronn & Hamilton, 2004; Spillane et al., 2007).

Pressures of the Principalship

In the post NCLB (2002) era, campus leaders have found themselves struggling to find solutions to narrowing the achievement gap (Meddaugh, 2014). Already immersed in a job with challenging work conditions, the addition of high-stakes testing has added a compounded layer of pressure. Facing public scrutiny from local, state, and federal entities, principals are left managing an organization in need of immediate turnaround (Houle, 2006). According to Senge (1990), the dynamic and detailed complexity of being a school principal, coupled with a lack of professional resources available to them, leads to feelings of professional incompetence.

Failing to meet the achievement mark, principals at low performing campuses carry the stress of school restructuring, reassignment, or job loss altogether. Darling-Hammond (2010) and Mitgang et. al (2012) cite principal turnover reaching crisis proportions. Viewed as an unattractive career choice, the principalship has seen an increase of vacancies, as current incumbents near retirement (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). These conditions have set the stage for novice principals, as they find themselves beginning their careers at ineffective schools with little to no knowledge of how to transform the campus and with limited district support (Beteille et al., 2012; Houle, 2006; Mitgang et al., 2012; Weingartner, 2009).

Lashway (2003) cites the principalship as encompassing too many responsibilities for the compensation received. Principals are under immense stress as they tackle the demands of diverse constituents, a fast-paced atmosphere, feelings of inadequacy, and the isolated nature of the role. "The principalship is not a sought after goal for many educators, as the job has become tangled and difficult. It involves long hours, late nights, and lots of conflicting demands from various stakeholders" (Hickcox, 2002, p. 2). As principals navigate these challenging conditions and the bombardment of decision-making they face on a daily basis, it is clear to see how

developing capacity in self and others would be easily pushed to the wayside (Mullen & Cairns, 2001). Principals need pathways for growth and support if they are expected to carry the weight of the campus on their shoulders.

Lack of Principal Support

Serious consideration must be given to the role principals play in initiating, establishing and sustaining capacity building (Leithwood et al., 2009). Though pushed to increase their schools' organizational capacity by engaging all constituents, how do we know principals are capable of such a task (Huggins et al. 2017)? Principals may not be willing or able to foster leadership capacity building in others (Torrance, 2013). Highly skilled leaders are not born, and do not emerge from school administration programs ready and prepared to lead others (Lashway, 2003). Principals lack training and the experience it takes to transform low-performing campuses into high-functioning learning organizations (Meddaugh, 2014).

The principalship is often times seen as a "sink or swim" profession, with little support or guidance (Lashway, 2003). Trying to decipher textbook from the real world, the principalship requires skill acquisition and ongoing support from a knowledgeable, reliable source (Zachary, 2005). Unfortunately, research has historically shown that mentoring and on-the-job training for principals has not been a high priority (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013, p. 24). With a lack of professional development and coaching opportunities for novice and experienced principals alike, the challenge to build organizational capacity is eminent (Dimmock, 2012).

Another challenge that principals face as they work to build leadership capabilities in others is the challenge of "when to let go" of responsibilities and tasks. Especially at low-performing campuses, with high stakes accountability pressures, principals require a guide to find balance between nurturing leadership and remaining invested in the process (Huggins et al.,

2017)? Though shared leadership is encouraged, principals lack guidance on when it is or is not an area that can be tasked out to teacher leaders. If principals have not had the opportunity to work with coaches that developed their own capacity through on-the-job professional development, how do they have the mental mindset to do the same with their own staff (Leithwood et al., 2008)? Principals must be afforded the same opportunity teachers are to develop their skill set to foster their own personal capacity (Dimmock, 2012).

Leadership Coaching

Reviewing the school capacity framework, outlined in Figure 1, each of the five dimensions of building capacity is directly affected by professional development (Youngs & King, 2002). Specifically addressing the principal leadership dimension, professional development is a critical component to improve the overall quality of organizational capacity (Newmann et al., 2000). "Widespread support can be found in the literature for the notion of principal as both individual and organizational capacity builders" (Huggins et al., 2017). Principals are tasked with directly building the leadership capacity of those around them, yet scant research exists on building the personal capacity of the individual principal (Mitchell & Sackney, 2001). A critical need exists for principals to experience real-life, job-embedded, continuous, and instructionally centered professional development (James-Ward, 2011). Leadership coaching has emerged as a professional development training model to provide that "just in time" support to cultivate and equip novice and veteran principals for the challenges they face (Lubinsky, 2002). Gaining traction as a nontraditional approach to professional development, leadership coaching for principals provides opportunities to build organizational capacity by creating and sustaining systemic processes that will lead to increased student achievement (Bloom et al., 2005; Killion, 2002; Reiss, 2007).

Leadership Coaching Fundamentals

District wide improvement efforts for campus principals fundamentally demand that they learn to "manage ambiguity" (Honig, 2001). Supports for learning-on-the-job are often few and far between and leaders find themselves "learning to lead what they don't yet know" (Swinerton. 2006). According to Hamlin, Ellinger, and Beattie (2008), "coaching is a core process defined as a collaborative relationship between coach and coachee with the intent of reaching professional or personal development outcomes" (p. 288). Used as a tool to develop skills in employees, provide systematic feedback, and link individual effectiveness with organizational performance, coaching requires purposeful design (Mayer et al., 2013).

According to Pardini (2003), "when it comes to leadership development, school administrators, unlike their peers in the corporate world, don't get much in the way of help or support, and can reap huge benefits from coaching" (p. 10). Leadership coaching provides principals opportunities for ongoing renewal to provide an alternative system of support that meets the needs of the 21st century administrator (Meddaugh, 2014). Robertson (2008) cites that leadership coaching as a form of professional development provides the essential components in which "praxis and transformative practice are the desired outcomes" (p. 16).

The primary purposes of a leadership coach are to "(1) expand an individual's or group's capacity to obtain desired results and (2) to facilitate individual or organizational development" (Wise & Hammack, 2011, p. 454). With an end result to enhance student achievement, principal coaching must focus on the practices of successful teaching and learning (Knight, 2009; Leithwood & Wahlstrom, 2008; Marzano et al., 2005; Reeves, 2009; Reeves & Ellison, 2009). Leadership coaching in education is a confidential and purposeful relationship specifically designed to assist the coachee in attaining breakthroughs, accomplishing goals, and building

leadership capacity (SIRC, 2009a). Coaches can provide job-embedded, practical and timely opportunities for relevant learning by providing a direct connection to practical knowledge (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2006; Fullan, 2008; Novak et al., 2010; Smith, 2007; Stein & Gewirtzman, 2003). Principals and coaches must be thoughtfully paired to truly impact instructional leadership capacity and districts may need to look beyond their interior walls for such a pairing (Warren & Kelsen, 2013).

External Coaching

Over the past few decades, school reformers have sought out and employed an external, school-based coach to initiate change and promote increased academic achievement (Elmore & Burney, 1997; Neufield & Roper, 2002). Honig and Ikemoto (2008) found that when external coaches are given the responsibility of being the main conduit in the reform process, they are positioned to be integral to the organizational change process. A growing number of studies in Canada, the United States, and England have shown that the use of external coaches has been instrumental in bringing about effective change in schools (Fullan et al., 2004). Acting as a liaison between district and campus personnel, external coaches are allowed to cross the insider-outsider boundary as they build trust with all stakeholders (Mayer et al., 2013).

External coaches are integral to the reform model, as they represent an outside perspective to schools, acting as intermediaries to bridge policy and practice (McLaughlin, 2006). By disseminating organizational knowledge to various stakeholders, coaches are critical in growing and establishing connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge (Espedal, 2005). With high turnover rates at low performing campuses, external coaches are pivotal in providing "consistency and institutional memory in the face of teacher and leadership turnover" (Mayer et al., 2013, p. 339).

Research on educational leadership has recently turned its attention to "external actors participating in increasingly central educational leadership roles" and has shown these actors as pivotal in attaining ambitious improvement goals (Honig, 2009, p. 411). Specifically used in underperforming schools, external leadership coaches have the ability to maximize the strengths of the entire staff that can lead to increased student performance (Meddaugh, 2014).

External Coaching in Practice: Historical Model

Though scant research exists on external coaching models in practice, one notable study goes as far back as 1978 as one of the most widely publicized school improvement efforts. Occurring between August of 1978 and February of 1981, Ron Edmonds, newly named chief instructional officer of the New York City public schools commissioned the New York City School Improvement Project (SIP). Engineering a program of interventions predicated exclusively around the following institutional effective characteristics: style of leadership and instructional emphasis in the building, school climate, implied expectations, and measuring pupil progress, Edmonds utilized an external coach model to execute the program (Edmonds, 1981). With a design and implementation model for student success, the program was created with the hopes to "improve the school systems basic approach to teaching and learning" (Edmonds, 1982, p. 6).

Edmonds first set out to recruit and train fifteen external coaches in the research of effective schools including: the five effective institutional characteristics, the use of evaluative instrumentation, and coaching procedures for working with specific campuses. Schools, all of which volunteered for participation in the program, had one full time coach in the first year. In the second year, the coach was assigned to two individual campuses (Edmonds, 1982).

Coaches first assembled a campus committee of principals, teachers, and parents to review and approve all SIP sponsored projects. In order to get a gauge of strengths and areas of growth in regards to the five effective school characteristics, a needs assessment of the school was conducted using classroom observations and staff interviews. Based on the results of the needs assessment, a plan was developed jointly by the coach and the school-based committee to target the services that needed to be provided and in what specific areas. "Typical interventions included teaching principals the elements of instructional leadership; seminars to improve teachers' use of achievement data as a basis for program evaluation; and developing and disseminating written descriptions of the school's major focus" (Edmonds, 1982, p. 7). Annually evaluated on measures of institutional, organizational change, and measured pupil performance on standardized achievement tests, the SIP data showed an annual increase of students demonstrating academic mastery (Edmonds, 1982).

Leadership Coaching Model in Texas

Accountability in Texas

Education became a primary focus of newly elected President George W. Bush as he reauthorized the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as No Child Left Behind [NCLB] of 2002. Federal law now dictated high stakes testing and clear policy on accountability, which included rewards and sanctions for individual states, districts, and schools (Vasquez Heilig, Young and Williams, 2012). NCLB required states to develop content standards in reading and mathematics for grades three through eight, with subsequent assessments to follow. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was also identified for each individual state based on disaggregated test result data for all students and subgroups based on

race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and disability (Jackson and Lunenburg, 2010).

While NCLB allowed for rewards if test scores were high or showed improvement, individual schools that failed to meet AYP on a yearly basis faced harsh penalties. These penalties increased as schools failed to meet AYP over consecutive, concurrent years (US Department of Education, 2002b). Texas implemented a plan, complete with a standardized assessment that fell in line with NCLB's expectations.

Years later, during the 2009 legislative session, Texas House Bill 3 was passed and then tweaked in 2011 charging the "Texas Education Agency (TEA) with developing a new accountability system that overhauls the state's standards and assessments, incorporates new measures of college and career readiness among the system's performance indicators, and revamps the state's accountability requirements and structure" (Reed et al., 2012, p. 89). Texas prepared to transition to its fifth assessment program since 1979. Working to keep pace with the growing national consensus to provide an aligned K-16 educational program that focused on fewer but more in depth skills, TEA unveiled the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) in 2011-2012 school year (Texas Education Agency, 2010). STAAR represented the most rigorous assessment the state had seen to date, with reading questions on a higher cognitive complexity level with embedded critical analysis and content area questions that allowed for more integrated and authentic assessment with process skills assessed in context (Texas Education Agency, 2010). With STAAR came a new state accountability rating system in the fall of 2013. Based on a four-performance area index, campuses and districts received an overall rating of either Met Standard or Improvement Required (IR).

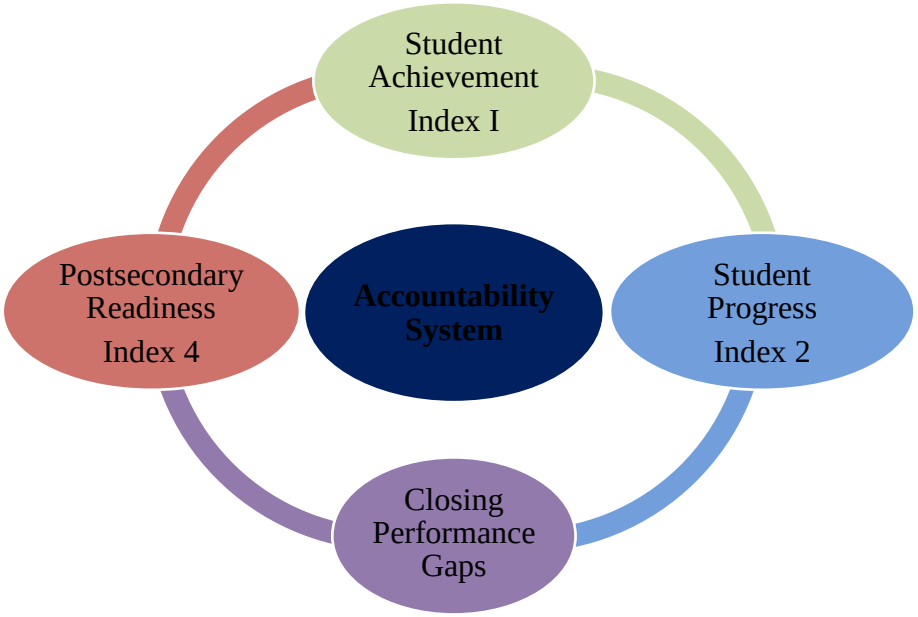

Figure 2. **Four Performance Area Index for Campuses and Districts by TEA** (2013).

To receive a Met Standard rating, the campus or district had to meet performance targets on all indexes for which they had data. Index One specifically focused on overall student performance for each of the following subjects: reading, math, writing, science, and social studies. Index Two shifted attention to student growth, independent of overall achievement levels for each race/ethnicity group, special education, and English language learners. Students were given point assignments if they met or exceeded their growth expectation level. Closing performance gaps was Index Three's focus. It looked at the met and advanced passing rates for economically disadvantaged students, and based on the previous year's data, the two lowest performing race/ethnicity student groups for the campus. Finally, Index Four honed in on postsecondary readiness by gathering the percentage of students that met advanced level on two or more tests in that administration year (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

When data was reviewed and campuses failed to meet standard in the spring of 2013, Texas was faced with its first round of IR campuses and districts. The Texas Education Agency

Division of School Improvement was charged by Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39, Subchapter E, to identify campuses and districts with "performance concerns for accountability monitoring intervention activities" (Texas Education Agency, 2013). Once identified, IR districts and campuses had a litany of intervention activities as they had failed to meet the new state accountability system. Texas quickly came up with a systematic approach to aid these campuses. Known as the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS), campus leadership teams failing to meet the mark were now forced to execute data analysis, needs assessments, and development, implementation, and monitoring of a plan for continuous improvement. Plans specifically targeted and addressed the low performance of subpopulations as identified by the system safeguards. As the TAIS system descended upon those in need of support, school improvement in Texas officially had a new name and model (Texas Education Agency, 2013).

Texas Accountability Intervention System Framework

TAIS "is designed to establish the foundational systems, actions, and processes to support the continuous improvement of Texas' local education agencies (LEAs) and campuses" (TAIS Guidebook, 2016, p. 1). Now that IR campuses and districts were labeled for public viewing, the TAIS framework sought to move beyond mere classification of campuses, and hoped to provide differentiated support, based on individual campus or district need. Relying on a synthesis of decades of school improvement research founded in the work of Edmonds, Lezotte, and others, the TAIS Framework identified seven critical success factors (CSFs) that, when fully implemented, resulted in accelerated school achievement when coupled with district commitments and support systems (TAIS Guidebook, 2016).

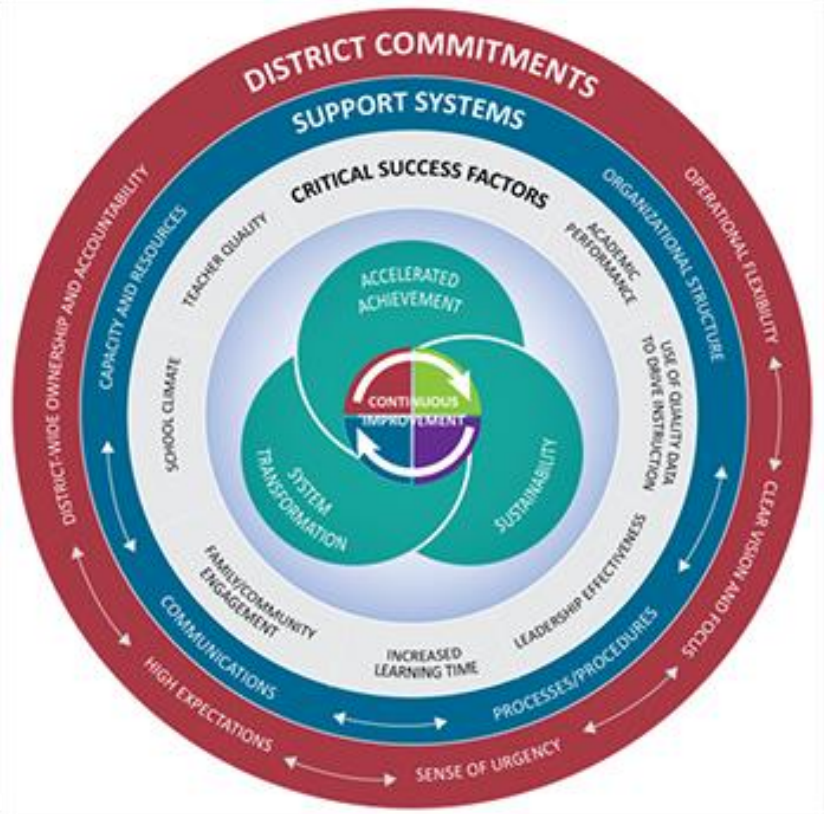

Figure 3. **Critical Success Factors Model** (TAIS Guidebook, 2016).

District commitments and support systems. Creating the outer rung of the TAIS model were external supports, known as district commitments, which were critical to the success of sustainable change. Operational flexibility, clear vision and focus, sense of urgency, high expectations, along with district-wide ownership and accountability were the five factors that must be bridged for the campus and district office to align their efforts. The TAIS model provides for campus support in implementing the district commitments with the role of the assigned District Coordinator of School Improvement (DCSI). This district-level leader should be in a position of school improvement or curriculum and instruction and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of all district-level commitments at campuses with low

performance. DCSI liaisons play a critical role in implementing and ensuring that the district commitments of the TAIS framework are followed with fidelity.

In response to the identified critical needs of the IR campus, the district must support operational flexibility by allowing the campus to shift necessary curricular and financial resources and practices in order to meet the high demands of school improvement under a clear and compelled sense of urgency (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). As the overseer for change, the district must assist the IR campus in its lone pursuit of increased student achievement by maintaining a clear vision and focus, paired with high expectations that permeate from the district office to campus daily operations (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The IR campus should not feel blame from the district but, in fact, support from all of the district critical stakeholders (Zavadsky, 2012). This support must reflect transparency and the belief that they accept some of the responsibility for the current level of campus performance and IR status.

Moving inward, the next rung of support in the TAIS model includes the following support systems: organizational structure, processes and procedures, communication, and capacity and resources. Under the organizational structure "district and campus leaders eliminate barriers to improvement, redefine staff roles and responsibilities as necessary, and empower staff to be responsive in support of improvement" (TAIS Guidebook, 2016 and Dufour & Marzano, 2011). It is important to shift the staff's mindset of burden of blame toward necessary improvement. Systemic processes and procedures must be implemented throughout the district and campus with clear internal and external communication and a streamlined vision for student success (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). Systemic processes and procedures must be implemented throughout the district and campus with clear internal and external communication and a streamlined vision for student success. Through careful recruitment, retention, and succession

planning the organization must utilize human capital and aligned resources (Hargreaves et al., 2013). This rung relies heavily on finding everyone's strengths and using them effectively.

Critical success factors. The seven CSFs are found within the next rung of the TAIS model. Each of these factors represents foundational elements that serve to guide the school improvement planning process. Grounded in research, each component has been proven to show that school-wide change initiatives are successful when all stakeholders develop and internalize the CSFs on their campus. By utilizing the CSFs, educators on a campus are given common language and understandings that can ground and support the work of school improvement (Gates & Watkins, 2010).

Academic Performance is the foundational CSF, as it is the sole reason for the intervention and continuous improvement process in the first place. Campus and district leaders must keep this CSF at the forefront of all school-wide decisions. While all CSFs are essential to sustained campus achievement, without seeing academic performance improve all other work is done in vain. Since increasing this CSF is the only way to lose the IR status, all of the other six CSFs must work in conjunction to support this component.

Increasing the Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction is the next CSF to significantly impact academic performance. Similar to Webers' (1971) "evaluation of pupil progress" and Edmonds' (1981) "measuring pupil progress", the CSF centered on data driven decision making notes the distinction between merely calculating the amount of data utilized and focuses in on how the actual data is being used (Hamilton et al, 2009). Ongoing communication of the data to all stakeholders, especially students, provides the greatest opportunities to positively impact student achievement (PSP Guidebook, 2016).

The third CSF, Leadership Effectiveness, concurs with earlier studies and is specifically set out to target supporting the improvement and ongoing developing of campus leaders. Campus instructional leadership, as noted earlier by Weber (1971), Lezotte (1979), and Edmonds (1981), can implement and bring about positive educational change. Second only to classroom instruction, school leadership is critical to successful turnaround efforts (Leithwood et al, 2004). As noted in the school capacity framework, Figure 1, principal leadership and effectiveness are critical to building school-wide organizational capacity (Youngs & King, 2002).

Increased Learning Time is also identified as a CSF. Synonymous with Lezotte's (1979) student opportunities to learn, this CSF promotes not only increasing instructional time and enrichment activities, but also opportunities for teacher development and collaboration (TAIS Guidebook, 2016). Careful evaluation must be paid to not just increasing time, but specifically to insure the time is filled with truly engaging instructional minutes (Jez and Wassmer, 2011).

Calling for increased opportunities for input from parents and the community, the fifth CSF, Family and Community Engagement echoes Lezotte's (1979) home school support systems (TAIS Guidebook, 2016). Shown to have a direct correlation to academic achievement, parent and community involvement allows students and their families to have increased opportunities to access community resources and services (Kaplan and Chan, 2011). Trends have shown that this CSF attributes to higher grades, increased attendance rates, and a greater opportunity for college and career readiness opportunities (Barton, 2003).

Clear and consistent high expectations fostered by an encouraging and welcoming climate can increase attendance rates and decrease disciplinary referrals (Scales and Leffert, 1999). This idea, mirroring Edmonds' institutional characteristic of school climate is the next CSF. School climate specifically contributes to the learning environment and is fundamental to

student achievement and teacher morale (Nomura, 1999). A positive climate is an intangible factor that can greatly impact sustained success. Schools must address climate issues if they want to ensure that reform strategies are withstanding, attributing to long term gains (TAIS Guidebook, 2016).

Teacher Quality completes the CSF model and "focuses on the need to recruit and retain effective teachers while supporting and enhancing the knowledge and skills of current staff with job-embedded professional development" (TAIS Guidebook, 2016, p. 6). Decades of evidence-based research have shown that teacher quality and increased student performance are clearly linked. Since teacher quality is the CSF that immediately affects student learning, as noted in the school capacity framework, Figure 1, it must be addressed quickly and effectively (Youngs & King, 2002). With a clear focus on professional development and a quality teacher program, campuses can directly impact student-learning outcomes (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

All seven of the CSFs work in tandem with the district commitments and support systems to reinforce the campus efforts of continuous improvement through the TAIS outcomes of accelerated achievement, sustainability, and system transformation. Though the TAIS framework is designed to provide campuses and districts with the tools necessary to effectively implement the change process, the system also provides additional external support staff to guide the campus leadership team. Understanding that the undertaking of school turnaround is no easy feat for a struggling campus and administrator, the TAIS process offers external personnel support to campuses to assist in understanding and implementing all aspects of the collaborative effort (TAIS Guidebook, 2016).

Professional Service Providers

Though the TAIS process is research-based, and designed to be executed by IR campuses in a systematic fashion, the interventions themselves are not just a turn-key program. With seven CSFs to analyze and implement to enact school turnaround, the external and internal pressures felt by struggling campuses can often leave them feeling helpless and without guidance on how to even begin implementing the TAIS framework. Though the DCSI is meant to support campus administrators from within the district, this may not be enough to achieve accelerated student achievement. Professional Service Providers (PSPs) are experienced, quality educators that are tasked to serve as external support coaches meant to guide the campus principal and leadership team as they begin to navigate the process of creating sustainable transformation under the TAIS. The PSP role goes far beyond mere task analysis, as they are not only responsible for providing technical support in implementing the interventions. PSPs have the opportunity to build the capacity of campus and district leaders in order to understand and fully implement the continuous improvement model (PSP Job Description, 2015).

In order for PSPs to systemically approach working with individual campuses on improving their current low performing status, they must be well versed in "current state policy and programs related to assessment, accountability, curriculum, and educator appraisal systems" (PSP Job Description, 2015, p. 1). They must be adept at best practices in respect to the CSFs and be able to incorporate their knowledge base into organizational structures and communication systems that bridge the collaborative work between the struggling campus and the district. Working together with the DCSI, the PSP must have a deep understanding of district fiscal, legal, and operational structures in order to leverage systems to remove unnecessary

barriers for campus success (PSP Job Description, 2015). Simply put, the PSP cannot allow logistical obstacles to interfere with the growth of the campus.

Due to accountability's requirement for rapid, effective change, the PSP must start at the top of the organization. In essence, principal coaching becomes the core responsibility of the PSP. Though they serve as the liaison for the campus and the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and local education service center (ESC), the PSPs role and responsibility to enact change starts with the change they are able to bring about and develop within the campus leader. With active listening, reflective questioning, and strong interpersonal skills, the PSP must have the skill set to "create an atmosphere of shared respect, trust, and confidentiality with campus and district personnel" (PSP Job Description, 2015, p. 1). Effective communication skills are fundamental, as PSPs engage campus and district leaders in critical questions surrounding low performing data and how to address root causes that will lead to collaborative solutions. PSPs have the capacity to serve as change agents, motivators, and inspirational leaders, as they use their ability to help campuses see failures as learning opportunities and celebrate successes (PSP Job Description, 2015).

PSP entry plans. Prior to the initial meeting with IR campus principals, PSPs must prepare for and know the background data of the campuses they will be spending the next two years, or more, with. By analyzing the most recent campus performance data, it is imperative to get a clear understanding of why the campus became low performing in the first place. Careful attention must also be paid to analyzing longitudinal data of the campus and district in order to identify trends. These trends can clearly inform and give a PSP a holistic look before they even step foot on campus (PSP Guidebook, 2016). With an explicit understanding of the data, the PSP

can enter the school with a road map toward achievement, but must work to garner buy in to bring the plan to fruition.

By helping them first understand their role, PSPs are able to clearly establish expectations with the campus principal. Identifying the scope and purpose of the work to come will set the stage for common understandings and goal setting. Building a relationship of trust with campus stakeholders and valuing the work of all staff at the onset will ease the transition of getting difficult agendas pushed through. Preconceived notions should be eliminated before the first day and the norm should be set that working together as a team is the expectation. An established Campus Improvement Team (CIT), composed of principal, PSP, DCSI, teachers, and parents, will all work together to systematically approach implementing the CSFs, system supports, and district commitments (PSP Guidebook, 2016).

Similar to the work of Edmonds (1981) and the NYC SIP, PSPs must first go about the work of conducting a valid needs assessment. Ensuring that campuses have effective methods for tracking qualitative and quantitative data, PSPs set out to support the campus principal in operationalizing the TAIS framework (PSP Guidebook, 2016). Identifying root causes of why gaps in achievement exist will uncover focused problem statements that can then lead to strategies and interventions that support the campus in achieving their annual goals. Creating a sense of urgency, the PSP must take the information garnered and share a clear picture of strengths and areas of growth with the entire CIT (PSP Guidebook, 2016).

Improvement planning follows as the CIT works to specifically address the problem statements that the needs assessment uncovered. With the newly identified strategies, interventions, and goals, the PSP works with the campus principal to create a guiding document, known as the Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP), to be used throughout the entire turnaround

process. Focusing on the specific CSFs that require more support, the PSP campus visits become an opportunity for building the capacity of the principal. Similar to the SIP coaches in Edmonds' (1982) schools, the PSP can specifically target and provide training in the areas of deficit for administration. Understanding that the role of the principal is critical, as identified in the CSF leadership effectiveness, the PSP must work in partnership by developing and implementing initiatives with fidelity. In turn, the principal will work to build the capacity of the rest of the administrative team and staff in the identified areas of need (PSP Guidebook, 2016).

Finally, as the year progresses, implementation and monitoring of the TIP goals become the focus of the work, as data checkpoints are established in all core areas. With each discussion, the PSP should require the campus team to not only identify areas of concern, but also to state leadership response and implementation of strategic undertakings. By acknowledging both of these items, the PSP leaves the leadership team with a measurable means to push the campus forward without having to be a constant presence on the campus.

Working with the PSP and utilizing the TAIS Framework, campuses are able to see a true picture of continuous improvement. Guidance is embedded in the TAIS training provided by the PSP, as campus principals realize that data analysis findings feed the needs assessment process and, subsequently, improvement planning. Reviewing the progress and feedback of the improvement plan then outlines the implementation and monitoring process. As data is constantly reviewed so incurs the dynamic interaction of continuous improvement. The steady cycle of data review, improvement, and implementation relies heavily on the effectiveness of the PSP (TAIS Guidebook, 2016). The PSP must frame the process, which is no small feat, in such a way that the campus principal does not feel defeated, but rather feels encouraged and empowered

to make constant gains. Without this validation, the process becomes inauthentic as the work simply becomes a means to an end.

PSP evaluation and effectiveness. PSPs have been providing external technical assistance to Texas schools in need of improvement for over twenty years. Working with campuses that are underperforming and receiving interventions in the state or federal accountability system, the PSP roles and responsibilities are rooted in the work of effective schools research. Evaluated annually by TCDSS and TEA, PSPs receive a rating of Meets Expectations, Below Expectations, or Unacceptable each year, based on feedback from campus principal, leadership team, DCSI, Region Service Center, and TCDSS/TEA support specialist. The next and final pieces of the evaluation come from student achievement data and a pre and post PSP self-evaluation.

Since the goal of the entire PSP process is so critical, the yearly evaluation is a necessity but does not provide enough information. While the PSP evaluation highlights ineffectiveness, it fails to convey the exact reason the model failed. Data on school turnaround efforts has shown that implementation of the TAIS model can prove effective but it does not always, therefore educators must turn their attention toward finding the difference makers, the intangibles that create success.

Summary

We must provide considerable attention to building organizational capacity in schools to promote excellence and equality in student learning (King & Bouchard, 2011). Understanding the complex role that the principal has on building school capacity to shape teaching practices and skills, and to provide conditions that foster professional community and program coherence, the focus must shift from isolated decision making to one that promotes inclusive, distributed

leadership (Huggins et al., 2017). “Leadership only succeeds if the leader brings other people into the same vision, and they are able to work together and trust each other” (Leaithwood et al., 2004).

Unfortunately, building school-wide organizational capacity is no easy task, and principals must be given the tools necessary to overcome the bureaucratic nature of schools, pressures of the principalship, and lack of professional development opportunities and resources. Kearney (2011) notes that principals must be part of the equation when referring to improving schools and education. The growth needs of the principal must be taken into account as an absence of empirically based protocols of this nature currently exists (Houchens et al, 2012).

Leadership coaching exists as an answer for principals and “offers an applied skill used to construct a functional path to innovative performance, enhanced skills and transformational leadership” (Farver & Holt, 2015, p. 69). By broadening the capacity of the principal, coaches work to facilitate development in a thought-provoking process to elicit and maximize personal and professional potential (Hargrove, 2000). More research is needed in regards to how coaches work to identify and develop capacity in principals, and how to maximize their role as a coach (Spillane & Louis, 2005; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

In Texas, the infrastructure exists to provide campuses and principals with support through the school improvement process, the TAIS framework, and PSP coaching network. However, the cyclical nature of low performing schools has shown that campuses already subjected to substantial local reform measures only repeat improvement stages or cycles as they enter corrective action plans and sanctions. There is little research that examines and evaluates the effectiveness of the PSP on Improvement Required campuses in Texas.

The primary role of the PSP is to provide support and build capacity for campus and district leaders in order to identify target areas of immediate school improvement. Though all PSPs follow a set script of activities and modules based on the TAIS framework, not all PSPs garner the same end results. The question remains: How does the role of the PSP answer the call to build the capacity of the campus principal and the infrastructure of school improvement with the urgency and demands of the system (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009)?

The literature revealed potential areas of study related to the role of the PSP to provide support and build capacity for campus and district leaders. Looking through the lens of the principal and PSP, an in-depth analysis of perceptions while navigating the TAIS process and CSFs, could uncover a pattern for educators utilizing external coaching models as innovative forms of professional development.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

External coaching for principals is emerging as a coherent system of support to provide sustained, systemic, and impactful change for school improvement (Datnow & Hong 2008). The purpose of this multiple-case, qualitative study of elementary principals and Professional Service Providers (PSP) on Improvement Required (IR) campuses in Texas is to discover the complex dynamics between principals and external PSP coaches as part of building leadership capacity for turning around low performing campuses. Focused on principal-PSP perceptions, this study will be conducted to develop an understanding about the work of external coaches and how they create entry plans to improve capacity building in principals. Specific attention will also be placed on PSP collaboration techniques with principals and the barriers and facilitators each party faces to produce changes in teaching and learning. This study will examine stakeholder perspectives to provide descriptive accounts about how specific PSP practices affected the practices of the building principal (Stake, 2006). The research questions, research design, participants, sources of data, and methods of data collection, and data analysis are included in this chapter.

Research Questions

The study will be conducted to answer the following two research questions:

1. How and in what ways do principal and PSP relationships impact school-wide capacity building?

2. Given the principal-PSP relationship, to what extent was student achievement impacted?

Research Design

The present study design is a multiple-case qualitative study of elementary principals and PSPs on IR campuses in Texas which will be conducted a grounded theory approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Case study will be used to explores three cases for describing the events, activities, and processes that occur in the PSP-principal relationship. The cases will be bounded by the IR time period and the activities of building capacity (Creswell, 2003). Several scholars have described case studies as a strategy for allowing researchers to focus on specific aspects of an individual or context that is of special interest to the researcher and is concerned with human experiences (McEwan & McEwan, 2003; Mertens, 2005; Patton, 2002; Trochim, 2001). For the purposes of this study, the specific interest of study be examining the phenomenon of principal coaching through the lens of external support systems. Perspectives from both PSPs and principals will yield descriptive accounts of how specific PSP practices affect capacity and practices of the principal within the context of working at an IR campus (Stake, 2006).

A grounded theory approach to the research design will be used "to ensure that the emerging theory arises from the data" (Crotty, 1998, p. 78), and therefore, it is more likely to resemble reality than theory based solely on speculation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The intent of the study on principal-PSP perceptions will be for generating a theory of actions that may be revealed through the constant comparative analysis of data from three PSP-principal pairs experienced with the phenomenon as shared the TAIS process (Creswell, 2007).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explained qualitative research as an "interpretive, naturalistic, approach to the world [that] attempts to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 13). Understanding of the data will be "oriented toward

exploration, discovery, and inductive logic" (Patton, 2002, p. 55). The data will include the viewpoints and perceptions of the research participants as they make sense of the school improvement process in relation to building capacity on the IR campus. The findings will be organized around the interview and document data.

Using a qualitative inductive approach throughout one-on-one semi-structured interviews, as Willis (2007) noted, the importance of conducting interviews involves using methods that allow the researcher to reflect on an individual's experiences in a social context, which is in this case, the context of leadership coaching. This study will also look at PSP entry plans and the documents associated with training new PSPs. Each PSP's perspective and assessment of his or her entry plan will allow for personal experiential intensity. Reviewing documents will establish a holistic picture of the preplanning involved in working with individual principals. Additionally, the researcher will discover specific observations about the data to allow the "categories of analysis to emerge from the data as the study progresses" within the context of constant-comparative analysis (Mertens, 2010, p. 225). Conducting research and examining external leadership coaching of principals through a qualitative lens will provide a clearer understanding of the experiences of principals and coaches in an attempt to provide a framework for the work of leadership coaching and establish the validity of existing strategies for building organizational capacity.

Site and Participant Selection

This research will be conducted primarily through interviews to discover the experiences of external coaching had by PSPs and elementary principals on IR campuses. Interview sites will be selected qualifying campuses statuses and recruiting participants for the study. Those actions will occur using the methods and criteria provided in the following two subsections.

Site Selection

Three formerly IR designated elementary schools in Texas will be chosen as sites for this study. Purposeful, theoretical sampling will be used to identify three schools in the same district that went through the TAIS process sometime between the Fall of 2014 and Spring of 2017. The same districts will be chosen to provide a constant for comparison purposes.

Sampling and Participants

Participants will be initially selected by snowball sampling for the PSP first through the PSP Network. Any PSPs that participated in the TAIS process with an associated principal from the Fall of 2014 to Spring of 2017 will be eligible to participate. Snowball sampling will aid the researcher in choosing particular participants. First, the researcher will use the network list to identify the first PSP. Next, the researcher will ask if the participant knows additional PSPs who meet the criteria of the study (Hays & Singh, 2012). The original list of PSPs will be reviewed to ensure only elementary PSPs are targeted.

Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to not just "study whoever is available, but to use judgment to select a sample they believe, based on prior information, will provide the data they need" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 104). Furthermore, all study participants will meet the following selection criteria:

1. Participate in the TAIS framework for school improvement
2. Serve as a principal of an IR campus
3. Serve as a PSP at an IR campus
4. Agree to participate

Each participant's personal information and data will be gathered from the three pairs of principal-PSP participants who agree to participate in the study. Through email or phone call, all

participants being studied for this research study will be made aware of the purpose of the study, and the data collection instruments being used, including the planned interview questions. A letter of consent will be obtained from each participant. The letter of consent will specify the purpose of the study, what participation means, benefits to participation in the study, and procedures for maintaining confidentiality.

Sources of Data

Mertens (2005) and Patton (2002) both contended that the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative studies. In addition to the prominent role the researcher plays, the literature on qualitative studies described the use of multiple data sources in qualitative research (Mertens, 2005; Patton, 1990; Trochim, 2001). For this study, a methodological triangulation of interviews, supporting documents, and field notes of the three principal-PSP pairs will inform the findings.

Interviews

Interviews will be used to discover the six participants' individual perspectives and viewpoints. One-on-one, semi-structured interview methods will be specifically used to allow the questions to be more flexibly worded with a mix of structured and less structured sections (Merriam, 1998). Two 60-minute interviews will initially be established with each of the six participants. The first interview will establish background data, while the second will be focused on the detailed work of the TAIS process and specifically the entry plan style of the PSP. A data sheet will be used by the researcher to note pertinent descriptive findings of each participant's individual experience. A digital audio recording of interviews will be made at each session and transcribed after each interview to facilitate ongoing data analysis. Participants will be given a

copy of the interview questions and later the transcribed interview data to allow them the opportunity to verify or expand on their responses.

Documental Data

Since documents frequently provide clarity and insight into settings, supportive documentation will be chosen as another form of information for this study (Morse & Richards, 2002). Documents will be requested before and during the interviews as part of triangulation and reinforcement of participant responses. Some examples of the document data will include PSP entry plan documents, PSP network support manual notes used with principals, coaching prep forms, action plans, informal notes, and email correspondence.

Field Notes

The final source of information will be field note observations. These will help the researcher ask follow-up questions and maintain a pace with each interviewee (Mertens, 2010). The notes are intended to aid in understanding the respondents feedback and can be used to provide clarity as the researcher reviews transcribed conversations.

Methods of Data Collection

Data collection for this multiple-case qualitative study will include semi-structured interviews with six participants, documents related to the study, and field notes.

Institutional Approval

Ethical considerations will be made for the participants' interviews as the primary tool for this qualitative research. Maintaining the confidentiality of all participants will be upheld at all times. The researcher will ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of participants by obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Texas at Austin. All consent will be obtained from selected districts

prior to working with individual principals on campuses to conduct any research. The researcher will assure the IRB that the data will be maintained in password protected files and in locked cabinets only accessible to the researcher.

Interviews

After obtaining IRB approval, the researcher will contact the PSP Network at Region XIII to initiate the process for identifying qualifying PSPs. Once identified the researcher will request interviews with the PSPs while simultaneously identifying principal pairs that would be willing participants as well. Each chosen interviewee will be contacted by email and/or phone and made aware of study objectives and process and the fact that the interviews will be audiotaped. During the interviews, the researcher will use a data sheet to note descriptive findings and additional data. The digitally audiotaped interviews will be transcribed by an external party to create consistency and allow the researcher the opportunity to interact more fully with participants.

All interviews will be conducted in locations most convenient for the principals and PSPs. Since the PSPs are not employees of the selected districts, these interviews will most likely take place at non-school locations. The principals' interviews will more than likely take place on their campuses. An interview guide will be used by the researcher to ensure that "the same basic lines of inquiry were pursued with each person interviewed" (Patton, 2002, p. 343). In using the guide, the researcher anticipates the interviews will remain conversational and situational but also will allow time for respondents to reflect and provide detailed answers. The researcher will request that the PSPs provide their entry plans or associated documentation tools they utilize when working with principals during the initiation phase of the TAIS process. Clarification and follow-up questions will be included in the semi-structured interviews.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis is challenging, according to Patton (2002), for the researcher attempting to make sense of massive amounts of data. There is also no particular moment when data analysis begins because it is an ongoing process from initial impressions during data collection to the final conclusions (Stake, 1995). Using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) outline for grounded theory, the tasks of constant comparative analysis of semi-structured interviews, supporting documents, and field notes will be completed as the researcher analyzes all collected data using open, axial, and selective coding processes (Mertens, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morse & Richards, 2002; Patton, 2002).

Open Coding

Open coding begins as soon as interviews are transcribed, documents are collected, and field notes are taken and finalized. Mertens (2005) noted, at this stage, "the research must take apart an observation, a sentence, or a paragraph and give each discrete incident, idea, or event a name or label that stands for or represents a phenomenon" (p. 424). The open coding process that follows allows data to be broken down and compared through close examination (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This first step has the researcher recording thoughts and speculations as well as allows themes to surface that may influence the focus of the study as it develops. Once initial codes are developed, the researcher examines and narrows codes and patterns during multiple reviews of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Axial Coding

Axial coding of the data involves putting data "back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96). Data are reassembled around specific categories based on the nature of identified relationships (Strauss &

Corbin, 1998). In grounded theory analysis, axial coding is the phase where the researcher begins to look for a direct association between the data and the research questions (Mertens, 2005; Patton, 2002).

Selective Coding

The final stage is selective coding as the "process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in the categories that need further refinement and development" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 116). This coding step is important for grounded theory work, as it distinguishes it from merely naming and categorizing data and validates the researchers theory by grounding it (Mertens, 2005). At the end of this process the researcher reveals the creation of a central category to which all other categories are related.

Strategies to Promote Trustworthiness

One drawback of qualitative research, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), is the multiple ways researchers can interpret data. To provide more reliable and valid qualitative data the researcher will utilize member checking, peer debriefing, and thick, rich descriptions as strategies to promote trustworthiness. First, Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined member checking as the process by which data are returned to participants for accuracy and resonance with their experiences. In the case of this study, participants will receive a transcribed copy of their interview responses to verify the accuracy of the transcript. This will ensure that perceptions shared in the interview were clearly understood by the researcher and will strengthen the credibility of the study.

Second, peer debriefing will be used for an outside reviewer, familiar with the research on external leadership coaching, to examine the data and codes using a critical lens. This peer

review will enable the researcher to challenge research assumptions and question the methods and interpretations as part of reducing bias (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This effort will add credibility to the study by pushing the researcher to explore missed opportunities (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Third, transferability of the study will be addressed through the use of thick, rich descriptions to help readers recognize if they have experienced or could experience the phenomenon as representing the findings (Creswell, 2007). Denzin (1989) defined the difference between thick descriptions as "deep, dense, and detailed accounts," as opposed to thin descriptions "that lack detail and simple report facts" (p. 83). In sum, the researcher will provide vivid detail to enable readers can determine the applicability of study findings to other settings (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research design, purpose, questions, methodology, and supporting reasons for why a qualitative methodology was chosen. The requirements for snowball and purposeful selection of participants has been detailed. The procedures for data collection has been explicated to include semi-structured interviews, documental data, and field notes. The researcher will carry out data collection and analysis following the data analysis structure for grounded theory as open, axial, and selective coding. Finally, strategies will be employed for ensuring the findings' trustworthiness.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Professional Service Providers (PSPs) working in tandem with Improvement Required campus principals to overcome accountability concerns and build leadership capacity forms the foundation for this research study. The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings in three sections. The first section provides an overview of the study and its design for data collection, which is then followed by a description of participants interviewed and summary accounts of their individual experiences and backgrounds. The third section is based on analysis of all collected data and a summary of the findings is presented through resulting themes.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate the relationship between the Professional Service Provider and principal on IR campuses in Texas and, furthermore, how that relationship impacts school-wide capacity building. The study goes on to examine, given the relationship, to what extent student achievement was impacted. Through the analysis of information obtained from the perceptions of PSPs and principals who have gone through the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS), this study aimed to enrich and expand on how the PSP model is used to increase leadership capacity of campus principals in order to meet state and federal accountability, ultimately improving education for all students.

Participants studied for this research were selected by starting with a snowball sampling of PSPs through the PSP Network. Any PSP that participated in the TAIS process, with an associated elementary principal from the Fall of 2014 to Spring of 2017, was eligible to participate. PSPs identified for participation all worked within the same district and all had elementary experience. The PSP then identified the principal partner they worked with throughout the TAIS process. From a pool of 21 eligible PSP/principal pairs, six were chosen as

participants in the study and were interviewed January 2018 in an effort to answer the following two research questions:

1. How and in what ways do principal and PSP relationships impact school-wide capacity building?
2. Given the principal-PSP relationship, to what extent was student achievement impacted?

Research Design

The intent of the study was to consider participants experiences through a multiple-case qualitative study of elementary principals and PSPs on IR campuses in Texas using a grounded theory approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Case study was used to explore three cases for describing the events, activities, and processes that occurred throughout the PSP-principal relationship. For the purposes of this study, the specific interest was examining the phenomenon of principal coaching through the lens of external support systems. Perspectives from both PSPs and principals yielded descriptive accounts of how specific PSP practices affected capacity building and practices of the principal within the context of working at an IR campus (Stake, 2006).

Data sources included semi-structured interviews of a varied group of PSPs and principals who all participated in the TAIS process for IR campuses. Additional data sources included state and federal accountability reports for the associated campuses. The data includes viewpoints and perceptions of the research participants as they make sense of the school improvement process in relation to building capacity on the IR campus. A constant comparative analysis of all qualitative data gained from the interviews and associated documents were performed. Open, axial, and selective coding phases were used to conceptualize findings and lead to the final analysis of the results.

A qualitative inductive approach was used throughout one-on-one semi-structured interviews, and allowed the researcher to reflect on an individual's experiences in a social context which is, in this case, the context of leadership coaching. Reviewing documents established a holistic picture of the preplanning involved in working with individual principals. Conducting research and examining external leadership coaching of principals through a qualitative lens provided a clearer understanding of the experiences of principals and coaches to provide a framework for the work of leadership coaching and establish the validity of existing strategies for building organizational capacity.

Data Collection

For this study, a methodological triangulation of interviews, supporting documents, and field notes of the three principal-PSP pairs informed the findings. Interviews were used to discover the six participants' individual perspectives and viewpoints. A data sheet was also used by the researcher to note pertinent descriptive findings of each participant's individual experiences. A full list of specific documents referenced and examined for this study can be found in Appendix D some of which include notes, and campus data reports.

Out of the 21 eligible participants that were identified by the PSP Network, all received an email request to participate in the study (Appendix A). The email explained the purpose of the study and provided a copy of the consent form (Appendix B). Participants were then selected, based on the overwhelming response from a particular district, and researcher followed up with contacting those participants by email to schedule one-on-one interviews that were conducted with the Interview Guide (Appendix C) as a reference for collecting data.

All interviews were conducted in January 2018 at various locations. The interviews lasted between forty-five minutes to one and a half hours, were recorded and then, transcribed. The

transcripts were shared with participants and verified for accuracy and clarity. All collected data was analyzed using a constant comparative approach, the details and results of which are described below.

Presentation of Study Participants and Their Individual Data

In this section, a description of the study participants and their individual data is provided. Characteristics are presented globally and then individually. Following, a summary account of each participant's experience is shared, leading to the analysis of collected data and resulting themes.

Study Participant Characteristics

A total of six female participants, three PSPs and three principals, took part in this study. All of the PSPs had been former principals and all individually totaled over thirty years of experience in the educational field. The principal participants ranged from zero years experience to one participant that had been a superintendent before coming back to the principalship. All of the participants received the initial TAIS training provided for campuses that are labeled IR and, thus qualified all of them to be a part of the study. The following Table 4.1 summarizes the setting of each of the campuses the pairs represent.

Table 1

Background & Performance Setting for Studied Participants

	Campus A	Campus B	Campus C
Principal Experience	Novice Principal	10 yrs Administration	Novice Principal
PSP Experience	Novice PSP	3 yrs PSP	6 yrs PSP
Missed Accountability Index	1 (54/55) and 3 (27/28)	2 (29/33)	2 (28/33)
Student Population	757	581	748
Demographics *	H- 83% AA- 1% W-14%	H- 38% AA- 8% W-48%	H- 65% AA- 5% W-26%
Economically Disadvantaged	83.2%	63.7%	75.3%
English Language Learners	56.3%	3.6%	34.9%
Special Education	6.7%	11.5%	8.7%
Mobility Rate	12.9%	21.9%	16.2%

Note. *Student group percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and non-measure groups; H-Hispanic, AA- African American, W-White

Maintaining confidentiality of all participants was a top priority in this study and all participant data was de-identified and coded with pseudonyms, Principal A/PSP A, Principal B/PSP B, and Principal C/PSP C, to protect the district and participants' confidentiality. Data was kept in a secure location during the study, and will be destroyed after the mandated period for record keeping.

Principal A. Principal A came to Campus A for her first principalship after serving 7 years as an assistant principal at a feeder intermediate school within the district. She was hired by the outgoing campus principal in late August and took the lead for the campus in mid-September. The outgoing principal of Campus A became her direct supervisor in her first year of the principalship. Principal A's campus served the highest percentage of economically

disadvantaged students and English Language Learners. It is important to note that Principal A was at Campus A, as principal, two years prior to the campus being identified as IR. She worked with PSP A during her first IR year, but failed to meet standard. For the following year she was reassigned to work with PSP C. Reflecting on her first year she stated, "brand new principal, kind of in a daze. You know you don't even remember the first year, and you kind of want to go back and apologize, just like your first year of teaching."

PSP A. PSP A came to Campus A as a brand new PSP. With over 26 years experience as an elementary principal, she went on to support dual language instruction as a consultant across the state of Texas. She then applied to be a PSP twice before being selected to work with IR campuses. In her inaugural year as a PSP she adamantly requested to work solely with Campus A, but was ignored and a second campus in need of support was handed to her. Due to previous work engagements, she missed the initial PSP training and was left with online supports at best. Her reflections on the role preparation for new PSPs are noteworthy as she points out the lack of structure to the PSP PD at that time. As she was planning to work with Campus A she noted, "I was trying to read and find out, what is it they are planning? I was a little nervous about what this plan was supposed to look like? Who are these people? I hadn't had any introduction to them before."

Principal B. Principal B came to Campus B with over 10 years of experience in administration after recently leaving the superintendent position of a small, rural district. Prior, she served as a district coordinator of accountability and assessment and as an instructional administrator. She also served as an assistant principal of a large, underperforming, urban high school. Campus B's original principal left at semester and; therefore, Principal B started her tenure at the end of January and took up working with PSP C at that time. She was ready to take

on the IR campus as she noted, “you know, I’m really good at data. I have lots of experience working with struggling campuses that were always borderline”. Due to Campus A needing a greater level of support, Principal B only worked with PSP C for her first semester. After that, Principal B was paired with PSP B for the remaining years of consultation.

PSP B. Upon arriving at Campus B, PSP B already had three years of experience as a PSP. For eleven years she led a large, urban high school that supported traditionally underrepresented populations to achieving high academic success. She created an environment at that campus that led them to achieve the Texas Blue Ribbon National Excellence Award. Going on to become a district executive director of curriculum and instruction, she aligned professional development efforts to provide district academic focus. While she worked with Campus B, she also served at two other IR campuses within the district. Her view of the role of the PSP was clear as she reflected, “if we’re not honest with each other, if we’re not open about the good and the bad, then we’re not going to make any improvement. And if you just want a paper filler outer, I’ll send you some names. But I’m not your girl.”

Principal C. Principal C started her first principalship at Campus C with a couple of years experience as an instructional coach and assistant principal within the district. She had an experienced assistant principal and instructional coach that had already had previous experience working with PSP C. At times she reflects that she was not sure how to feel about coming onto an IR campus. As she noted, “it was my first year, so that set the bar high. I’ll be honest, I was a little, I think intimidated because PSP C would come in asking all these questions that I had no background to in regards to Campus C.”

PSP C. PSP C has worked with over twenty-six schools in Texas throughout her PSP tenure. After leading a successful, large, urban high school she went on to be an executive coach

for principals in a large urban school district. She also served in the capacity of supporting turnaround teams throughout the state of Texas, as they supported campuses to reach state standards. She became a PSP early on and also served on the PSP Advisory Board for several years. She noted that when she finished her work with coaching principals within a district capacity she was driven to the PSP work because "I get to work with great people. I don't have to be a politician. At the end of the day I walk out. You don't have to deal with the community problems and I get to focus on instruction and working with leadership teams."

The above descriptive information suggests that the respondents that participated in the study were characterized by varied backgrounds and work experience. The following is guided by the open-ended questions of the interview guide (Appendix C). A detailed summary account of data centered around the research questions and shared by the participants on capacity building and student achievement will now be explored.

Data Analysis

As designed by Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), the data analysis process consists of a close examination of all data to find themes and patterns that describe and explain the phenomenon being studied. Initially, all interviews were open coded and 21 codes were identified across four or more participant responses (Appendix E). The current study's findings are best understood grouped by themes within the research questions. Looking to provide focus and meaning to the participants' experiences, these themes work to organize the data in a way that adds clarity. Based on the data analysis process described in the research design and framed around the two research questions, the creation and clustering of codes led to the development of the following eight core themes (also found in Appendix F):

1. How and in what ways do principal and PSP relationships impact school-wide capacity building?

    A. Growth of School Leaders

    - Professional Development
    - Differentiated/Individualized Support to Campuses/Principal
    - Cognitive Coaching Questioning Strategies
    - Self Reflection
    - Building Capacity of Leadership Team

    B. Impressions of PSP

    - Initial Perception of PSP
    - PSP Reputation/ Credibility/Experience
    - PSP Preparation/ Lack of Professional Development

    C. Relational Impact

    - Climate/Culture
    - Trust/Building Relationships/Fit

    D. External Factors

    - District Commitment /Barriers to Support
    - PSP as Intermediary

2. Given the principal-PSP relationship, to what extent was student achievement impacted?

    A. Data Practices

    - Increased Student/Adult Learning Time
    - Tracking Student Data
    - Leadership Response to Data

B. Teacher Quality

- Teacher Knowledge & Skills
- Leadership Walk Throughs & Teacher Feedback

C. Focus

- Targeted Improvement Plan/Goals
- Whole School Reform/Accountability

D. Sustainability

- Lack of Systems/Building Program Coherence
- Commitment to the Work/Continuous Improvement

Impacting School-Wide Capacity Building

After analyzing respondent data, four themes emerged that specifically impacted school-wide capacity building: Growth of School Leaders, Impressions of the PSP, Relational Impact, and External Factors. PSP and principal pairs shared their impressions of leading schools plagued by accountability issues in need of rapid and dramatic turnaround support.

Growth of School Leaders

Professional development. Analyzing the interview responses, the need to implement professional development as a consistent practice was echoed by PSPs and principals alike. The school needs to foster a sense of constant growth for not only students, but also the adults that impact their learning.

> PSP B: So we're better to grow the people that we have. And we're a school. So my philosophy is, if we're a school that means that adults need to be growing as well as the kids. And no matter what the accountability rating is, if the adults aren't growing, the kids aren't growing as much as they could. So setting that expectation that we're all growing, and we're all getting better, so the conversation should be with almost every teacher, "What are you working on? And how can I help you work on that and give you the feedback that you want?"

Pushing administration to reflect on the staff development they are providing is important to insure that the most effective practices are being delivered to the teaching staff. PSP A explains the importance of being deliberate in the thought process behind learning opportunities provided to the staff in order to be most effective.

> PSP A: So, having those conversations, okay what staff development do you have? Why are you having it? Once they have it, what is your expectation when they come back? What is the follow up? I think after the first year, I learned that very, very well. What is your follow up because if it's not happening, what is happening? If it's not, is it just gonna be a session to put in the back of your mind cause we're gonna use it next year? Was there a better time to send that teacher? We need to know why we're doing it. Not just, it's a happening.

Principal B offered an explanation of teaching teachers through observation of other teachers. This allowed for quick, constant, professional development that required no preparation, but provided instant ideas, strategies, and reflective pieces.

> Principal B: We did learning walks with groups of teachers, and I built a schedule. And we would go for 20 minutes at a time and observe teachers. And then we'd come back and do feedback. And I tried to make sure that we had a balance of all the different grade levels. And that every teacher got to see different grade levels, 'cause they needed to see what was going on above and below their grade level. Cause I think the best professional development you could possibly have is to watch a teacher in action with kids. I think there's no better PD than that, is to actually see that happening.

Professional development was cited by PSPs and principals as a fundamental piece to student achievement on campuses. Without the push for growth by all parties involved, stagnation occurs and schools begin to enter the cycle of failure.

Differentiated/individualized support to campuses/principal. Knowing that a "one size fits all" approach, when meeting with principals of different schools, is unlikely to generate improvement is a keystone noted by PSPs throughout the research. Clearly understanding that

everyone's needs and skill level are different is imperative to finding success on a campus. PSP C summarized that point in this way:

> You have to really get to know what are the skills of the team, and you move in that direction. There is not ... I mean, obviously, there are general things, like physical improvement, data use, and all that. Even how you approach those general things are going to depend on the skill level and the experience level, the knowledge level, the skill level, the skills and knowledge that the leadership team has, whether it's a brand new principal or a very seasoned principal, and the personalities. You wouldn't believe everybody is so very different. So, it's like you differentiate, just like you do as a classroom teacher.

Implementing differentiated strategies at different campuses brings up the idea of equity versus equality. It is unlikely that any two principals or schools would need the exact same supports. Ultimately, schools need to be consistent in the end goal of student success; however, the steps taken to get there may not be the exact same.

> PSP B: Where if I'm in my district, well I'm like, well if I give support to this principal I've got to give it to all the others, like I have to be fair. I don't have to be fair. I can just pay attention to what you need, and help walk you through your problems. We're not all going to be the same, and we don't want to all be the same. Schools need something different.

On the other side of research, principals noted differences they found between working with an experienced PSP and working with a novice PSP.

> Principal A: I think PSP C is a good read of character, and she has so much experience as a PSP working with different levels of campus principals that I think she was able to apply that too when she came to work with me. And whereas with PSP A, it was her first year, it was black and white, and she was just doing what she thought her role as a PSP was.

Here, the PSP having a deeper knowledge of their role directly affected the impact they could have on a principal and their school.

Cognitive coaching questioning strategies. When a PSP works with a principal of a low performing campus, asking deep, reflective questions is part of the role. It may not always be an

easy task, but it is necessary to insure focus remains on the task at hand. As PSP B noted, "…using those coaching questions, and then sometimes sort of being persistent." Even if the principal does not have an immediate response, it is critical to the process to make sure the question was not left unanswered.

Throughout the interviews, principals confirmed sentiments of how great of an impact these questions had on developing their skillset as they were walked through a true coaching cycle. For principal A, the coaching became a regular need, even if her PSP was not at her campus, "we would talk in the morning on the phone when she was driving and I was driving, and she would coach me through what I was going to do that day and my meetings." This model lent itself to the concept of coaching relying on constant reflection and room for improvement.

The PSP has the ability to develop the principal as a whole. They provide an outside, unbiased perspective that can be used to grow a leader. Principal A developed her skills in a broad range of areas on her campus and noted,

> PSP C was able to guide me in just being an overall campus leader, culture and climate, school processes ... the student learning piece, all of those pieces. So a true, overarching campus leader is how PSP C was able to coach me and guide me through. She had me look through all different things and all different lenses.

For Principal C, the impact the PSP had on her as a leader was even more profound.

> She made me feel invincible. A lot of questions of, "Why can't you? Why don't you? What's stopping you? Who is 'they'?" You know how sometimes you'll say, "Well 'they' said I can't, or 'they' don't think I-" So she would say, "Well who is 'they'?" And you just sit there for a second feeling silly because you realize that 'they' doesn't exist. It's just those preconceived notions that we have as educators, because we see, we see that invisible box that we're sometimes stuck in. But PSP C made me see that like, "What box?"

The data collected in the interviews deemed the questioning strategies used by PSPs as crucial to principal development. Going through the coaching cycle, the questions presented allowed for the reflection piece that is essential to growth.

Self reflection. When responses to interview questions were reviewed, five of the six respondents cited the importance of not only completing a task, but also reflecting on the task. Often times, a plan is put into place, but is never revisited to measure effectiveness, the need for revision, or how to implement next steps. Part of the responsibility of the PSP is to push the principal toward reflection. With the time constraints of the principalship, PSP B describes finding time for reflection as,

> What I find is that my visits are sometimes that time. Because they're so busy, and there's so many demands on their time, that's one of the gifts I can bring them--a little space that people, if the building's not burning down, people aren't going to interrupt them for a few minutes. So we can pause and say, "So how's that really going? Is it really working? If it's not working, what changes can we make?"

Principals saw this push for self-reflection as part of the coaching cycle. Principal A mentions how self-reflection, through questioning, was never absent from meetings. "In our meetings with the DCSI, our meetings with just her and I, our meetings with our campus leadership team, and then, even in our coaching calls… everything was geared toward reflection." Making self-reflection habitual allowed leadership teams to improve systems, develop new ideas, and plan for future measures all geared toward the goal of student success. After their initial meeting, Principal C, seeing the value in this portion of the coaching cycle, requested that each of her meetings with PSP C had a designated time on the agenda to reflect on decisions made about the school.

Building capacity of leadership team. When considering growth of leadership, all principals and PSPs agreed that leadership was not about just one person. To create lasting

change, a team of people need to buy into the ideas presented and learn effective ways to carry out these plans. Principal A summarized the necessity of building a strong team by stating, "even though you have the campus principal, and the buck stops with the campus principal, you still need a whole team to make decisions and to work together."

PSP A worked to coach whomever the principal requested for her to assist, but knew it was imperative to stay in a coaching role, not to take over the role as leader of the school. She says, "…if I work with the staff, I take it over. I'm going to leave, and that person is going to stay. So, what can I do to support that principal and help them unfold and do a lot to be that critical friend?" PSP B had similar views on her role in the school and where coaching should take place.

> I hear some PSPs who go in and work directly with teachers. And I'm not unwilling to work with teachers, but I feel like my job is to build the capacity of the leadership team to do the work after I go. So if I go and work directly with teachers, I'm not building the leadership team's capacity. So I hear some people, "Well I came in, and I got the team, and they did this and we did that." Well now you're running that team, the principal isn't doing that or whoever needs to do that. So there's not clear direction on how, like, you just need to get them out of IR or how you do it. But if you go in and do the work for them, that's not building.

PSP B, like PSP A, took note of the reality that she would not be a permanent fixture on the campus and that the leadership must be able to sustain improvements without her. Principal C agreed with the concept of shared leadership, starting with principal coaching, and stated that, "PSP C definitely helped with that leadership piece of me learning to delegate, and what to delegate, and how to delegate."

When developing campus leadership, it is necessary to look at a broad range of people, depending on where the strength of your campus lies. Even though the PSPs and principals

interviewed agreed on growing the capacity of the principal, PSP C did note that it may not be the appropriate plan for every campus.

> Maybe "it" would never happen with someone. They're just not, you know coachable, I'm working with a principal now that it never will happen. She's very much a lone ranger, and so I don't really work with her that much. I work with teacher teams and leader teams. So, basically, I find the entry point, because when you really get down to it, I work for the kids. I work with student learning and my role is to make sure, no matter what, I can help increase student learning. I look for who can really make that happen. If the principal isn't that person, keep looking. I'm just not going to try to make something work that wouldn't really work. You just kind of look at, 'How can I utilize my strengths to help move this school and the student learning?'

Impressions of PSP

Initial perception of PSP. Based on interview responses, when a PSP is named to a campus, there is a large amount of uncertainty coupled with high emotions due to the recently assigned IR label. Being unsure of who the PSP is, where they are coming from, and what their role is on the campus can lead to a variety of reactions. PSP B describes arriving at a campus that had met standard based on student performance (Index 1), but had not shown enough growth (Index 2) and, subsequently, received the status of IR,

> When I showed up there, like when I first met with the faculty, I had a giant target on my chest because they were mad, and I was a representative of TEA in their minds, and they weren't taking this sitting down.

While PSPs are not actually employed by TEA, it is a conclusion that is often assumed by teaching staff. In some cases, it is necessary for principals to play into that idea. The mention of TEA, the ones who deemed a school as needing improvement, immediately carries a weight of importance on a campus. Principal A discusses how her PSPs encouraged her to use this notion, when needed, "You just let them know the TEA person's coming, and get them that sense of urgency, the fire to their feet."

On the other side of things, there are times when a school genuinely feels at a loss and welcomes the assistance of anyone, regardless of who employs the help. Principal B describes coming to a campus that felt this way. She knew she needed to explain the role of the PSP to her staff as someone whose sole goal was to spark change that would lead to improvement,

> It's the timing. I was there. They were like, "We're screwed. We need help. Fix us," when I came in. And then I actually said the PSP's actually going to help us. I'm not certain that before me, the teachers believed that the PSP was actually going to be a helpful person. I think they believed the PSP was going be like a spy. And when you have that going on, you're not going be able to move a campus.

The initial impression of the PSP on a campus is an important moment. It is crucial that a principal reflects and decides which message delivered to the staff will ignite the greatest amount of growth.

PSP reputation/credibility/experience. While the initial impression of a PSP is key to establishing relationships on a campus, more importantly, perhaps, is the selection of the PSP. With a network of people to choose from, it can be difficult for a principal or a district to be sure that they are selecting the right person for the job. Often times, when making the decision, the final choice is based on a combination of a PSPs reputation and experience. PSP B discusses the difficulties districts face when selecting a PSP,

> There is a PSP resume and a formal list and a way to do it, but districts are feeling stress, assuming they have IR campuses. So finding somebody they trust, and that they think has the right skill set, is sometimes largely like calling people and saying 'Who do you know that does this work, and what's their track record?'

For Principal A, this became true when she selected her PSP; she had to ask other principals who had experienced working with a PSP. "The trust with PSP C was built on what I heard from other people who worked directly with her. Her reputation precedes her. That's where that trust comes from, me really knowing that she knew what she was doing." Even

though it can be daunting to base a choice solely on what other people have said, it has come full circle as Principal A continues, explaining how she is now the person spreading the good name of PSP C to campuses she works with.

When asked about choosing a PSP for her campus, Principal B described the year that the district decided to move PSP C to help a higher need campus and, in turn, placed PSP B on her campus. Her staff struggled with this decision. "Well, it was a little bit different, because they were used to PSP C at that point. And they were not sure about the change. 'Why are we getting a different PSP, it's not fair. It's not right.'" Luckily, Principal B had prior experience with PSP B, and was able to explain her experience, strengths, and accomplishments to the staff. "I think because of the integrity that I knew about her--that helped make that shift."

Knowing that reputation is the central piece to their future employment, PSPs work to institute a strong presence on campuses that leads to positive change. This idea establishes a feeling of pressure as PSP A explained, "When a school does not get out of IR, I think I feel as bad as, or worse than, the principal. I'm not going to say it's the principal's fault. No, it's my fault. I couldn't help them."

Reputation and experience are key factors in selecting a PSP for any given campus. While PSPs must work hard to establish that reputation, and know that experience comes with time, districts must put forth the same effort to research PSPs and find the best fit for their schools.

PSP preparation/lack of professional development. Considering the work that is to be done by a PSP, it seems that streamlined, applicable, scenario based training would be required of anyone wanting to take on this task. However, the PSPs interviewed describe the lack of training. PSP B described it concisely when she said, "Although they do a PSP institute every

summer, and there are some required trainings during the year, pretty much…whatever skillset you bring with you, whatever your lived experience in education is, that's what you have."

Providing limited training can prove problematic if the skills held by a PSP have not been developed to a high enough level. PSP A discusses how she was removed from a campus after only one year, her first year, due to a district being disappointed with her performance. She explains her training as, "It was online. It's practically ... you read it, you write notes down, but that was it. There was no talking. There were no interactions." She goes on to explain how she relied heavily on PSP B and C, describing them as "wonderful, willing to help in any way", but going a step further and clarifying that even though the help offered is appreciated, it is difficult to accept if you aren't aware of what you don't know. Since her first year, PSP A expresses that the training has improved. In her second year, she explains that, "All of us that were second year (PSPs), were included with the first year PSPs for training, which was awesome. Really, really good training and gave you a better understanding of your role."

A lot of PSP A's concerns came from being a novice in the profession. However, being a more experienced PSP does not exempt one from some of the same worries. PSP B, who PSP C describes as "one of the few PSPs that I recommend—and I don't just recommend anyone" still has apprehensions about her role,

> One of the things that I worry about as a PSP is staying relevant. So I feel like the longer I'm out of a district, the more responsibility it is for me to personally to stay current, to read, to know what's going on now, what the best practices are to really dig into the new accountability system to help my principals understand that.

PSP B and PSP C, both now considered veterans with strong reputations in the PSP network, have discussed building a tool kit to share with all PSPs. PSP B wants to be sure to include strategies focusing on how to help principals to continuously improve in meaningful ways. PSP

C notes this standardized toolkit, used as professional development, could be used as a way to "calibrate all of us". Referring back to a PSPs experience, the toolkit would potentially "level the playing field" and allow novice PSPs opportunity to establish a strong reputation.

Relational Impact

Climate/Culture. Establishing a campus culture that makes everyone feel appreciated, supported, and invested is a challenge the principals of the IR campuses faced. The three PSPs all shared anecdotes of having to help their principal build a positive culture. When a campus goes low performing, that becomes the focus. Principal A doesn't shy away from the fact that she went through a period of despair before being able to flip the mindset. "I had to go through those stages of grieving with the PSP by myself. Once I got through them, I had to figure out how to balance a sense of urgency with staff morale." PSP A allowed Principal A to have her moment, but then helped shift her, and the staff, away from the negative outlook, and academic successes became the new area of concentration,

> We talked a lot about okay, what can you celebrate? Hey look, we just took a test. Our kids scored up here, on the high. We have so many kids now reading on grade level. Let's celebrate that. We're doing some of those. Recognizing those. Every time we go on a campus and we'd see their assessment, we always made sure we found something positive. That's really great. Oh, that teacher is really coming along. Doing a lot of those little celebrations was important, and then they could point it out to the campus.

While celebrations are central in building staff morale, the focus must remain on the ultimate goal of students experiencing academic success. PSP B tells of a school she was at where, "they were really kind to their kids, they really cared about their kids, but they didn't really push them academically." At the end of the day, teachers leaving behind academics will never lead to school improvement.

Principal C was nervous to hear the results of a school climate survey PSP C urged her to administer to her staff. She feared the responses would be a negative reflection of her efforts. PSP C heard her concerns, but implored her to move forward with the survey explaining, "It's not a 'you' problem. It's a 'we' problem. The campus needs to see that in this survey, you're getting whatever problems, they're part of the solution." A key component of PSP C's thought process was making sure information was shared with staff. Principal C did share with her staff and, according to PSP C, "Everybody. Everything. It really changed the climate." PSP C was able to change Principal C's outlook on the use of staff feedback, as she still implements the survey today.

PSP C pushes climate surveys because she so strongly believes that everything in the school is affected by morale. If there is no trust between teachers and administration, teachers and teachers, and teachers and students, a principal needs to know because the climate on their campus is grim.

> PSP C: Climate really is huge. Two of my three schools that I work with currently are in the bottom part of climate surveys. They're hostile teachers, they're arrogant. That's really difficult for me because I'm on the other side of the fence. Does it impact student-teacher morale, and then teacher student learning? You bet it does.

By having a school self-reflect, a leader will be able to review issues, failures, and successes and, then, create an action plan to addresses those items. If old systems and strategies are no longer effective, adjustments must happen in order to make progress. Change, however, is difficult. Once teachers feel they have a voice on their campus, staff morale will rise, making the movement for change easier.

Trust/Building Relationships/Fit. When a PSP is selected for a campus, it is likely that they have only briefly, if ever, met their principal partner. With the daunting task of removing

the IR status from a campus, a relationship has to be established immediately so that the work can begin. Again, experience and skill set of a PSP comes into play, as setting up relationships comes naturally to some people. As described by Principal A, "PSP C just has that air about her that makes you trust her. The words that come out of her mouth are so perfect. She has such a knack to have that relational capacity; built with you so quickly." Although it may not be a skill everyone inherently possesses, PSP A is adamant about the need to get a trusting relationship underway from the start,

> We're going to work this together and I haven't been perfect in my career, so I can tell you what mistakes I made so you don't make those mistakes. They have to learn to trust. I think part of building trust is number one, listening. Being honest when you hear something that is not quite the way it should be. Also, making sure that they understand your role, that when I get into the monitoring role, because that's part of my job.

PSP B shared a story of a time she took a principal she was working with to lunch. At every meeting they had, he would tell her that everything was good and moving in the right direction. Finally, because trust had been formed, she was able to say to him,

> 'You missed all four indices. You are not good. Now let's talk about this.' There are lots of good things happening, do you have some good teachers? Absolutely. Are you working hard? Absolutely. But we have to make some changes, or we're not going to get different results.

Throughout the principal-PSP meetings, there are many difficult conversations but, if a relationship exists, these can be very productive and beneficial. Part of the trust relies on the PSP respecting the fact that the principal is the leader of the school and they are acting as equal partners in the equation. PSP A honestly says, "It's not like working with one of your teachers. It's working with another administrator."

Transparency is also a notable point when discussing relationship building. Part of the job of the PSP is to turn in quarterly reports updating TEA of the school's progress in reaching

specified goals. Since the mention of TEA can heighten anxieties, PSP A says of dealing with these reports:

> Whenever I write a report that's going to be handed in, before I hand it in I send it to the principal and to the DCSI. They'll look at it. If I misinterpreted something, correct it right now. Then we can talk about it. I always tell them in person, this is what I'm going to say here. This is an issue or if I need to reword it, because we don't want to be called by the powers that be.

Principal C felt the pressure of the principalship, stating "Our jobs are so vulnerable. Like, we have to own everything that takes place on our campus." She expressed not having colleagues she could trust, and not wanting to turn directly to her supervisor, so instead, she relied on the relationship she had established with PSP C. PSP C was a sounding board for her to work through next steps, new ideas, and problems that arose.

If a principal is seeking to grow by learning from their PSP, the relationship established is crucial to the level of success that will be seen. The work done by this pair is extensive and important, but time is a constant factor to consider. Therefore, it is imperative that an open, honest connection is quickly made.

External Factors

District Commitment/Barriers to Support. When a campus becomes IR, they become the focus of the district. The campus, at this point, is assigned a DCSI to provide district level support. PSP C sees this as a valuable role, if carried out appropriately.

> If you have a DCSI they need to add value to the CIT, the Campus Improvement Team. They just don't need to be present, they need to be able to add value. In the district we are talking about today, there really was value add. People were supportive of Principal A, they were supportive of Principal C, so in those situations, it was amazing.

In the world of school accountability, the DCSI should have some knowledge of how to lead a school to change but, in the end, the PSP should be the expert on this concept. With this

mindset, a PSP could coach not only a campus leadership team, but also the DCSI. Principal A, who is currently in a new leadership role, describes variances of this that she has seen,

> It's fascinating to see some districts that the PSP's working directly with the DCSI. And coaching the DCSI, so the DCSI can go back on campus and work with the principals, which is what you want. But then you've got some DCSIs that won't let the PSP really do anything, other than enter the paperwork, you know, do the report. And they're not coaching.

If the role of the PSP is not clear to all parties involved, the level of expertise a district will receive from them will be skewed.

PSP B describes being an IR campus as having a feeling of isolation, thus making the connection with the district, and the PSP, necessary. While the district is a significant partner to the campus, the question of, "Does the district know how to best support a campus in need?" is raised.

> Sometimes, there are district decisions that are made that contribute to the under performance of some of their campuses. And sometimes they don't see that connection, and so how are resources distributed, how is support provided? Is it aligned? Sometimes because they are so worried about this IR status, they just throw all these resources at it. And they don't need more. They don't need this and that.

Money and resources are easy solutions for a district to provide that often, unintentionally, lead to more work for campuses. The district will feel impactful for distributing resources, but school leaders are left to determine how to manage tutors, assign student groups, and insure delivery of materials. Ultimately, these resources may not even address the needs of the campus.

PSP as Intermediary. When the district is providing supports, or making decisions that are not value-add to the improvement of a school, someone has to speak up for the school. With time always being a factor, the intervention must happen quickly. Often times, the PSP can play the role as the "go between" for a district and a campus. Furthermore, they can coach a principal through conversations and next steps, if it is more appropriate for the principal to be the liaison.

PSP B wants to empower the principal, but will intervene if no action is being taken by the district,

> I'm an outside person. And while they can fire me, it's not the same as your full time job. So sometimes I'm the one who says the brazen things, like "You know what? This is really a problem. This campus has struggled with blah, blah, blah… Can you intervene?"

PSPs see the role of liaison between the two as a balancing act. PSP A worries that a relationship that is too close to central office would be detrimental to building rapport with the principal.

PSPs are able to enact widespread change that impacts an entire district. Principal A explains how PSP C was able to change the set idea of all schools having all the same needs in this district,

> Actually, you know the biggest thing that PSP C did for the district was differentiation from campuses. She put it in their heads that there had to be differentiation for campuses. These two campuses are IR and you have got to give them more. And she pushed and pushed and pushed, and then that whole district shifted to provide more support for campuses who need more support, because of her.

Interestingly, although a district may respond to a PSPs request, the change may not be long lasting. Principal B explains that her PSP effectively pushed things through the district office that she was unable to move. She goes on to say, "the biggest thing is they were able to get me some more freedom in my scheduling. And I needed to have that to make some things work. Because after they left, that was taken away from me." The lack of continuity of systems once a PSP leaves proves problematic to sustained success.

Impacting Student Achievement

All of the emergent themes gathered from the interviews have some impact on the ultimate goal of an IR campus, student achievement. The themes discussed above, focused on building capacity, will ultimately lead to increased student achievement. The following four

themes: Data Practices, Teacher Quality, Focus, and Sustainability; however, have a more direct and immediate influence on academic performance.

Data Practices

Increased student/adult learning time. One of the Critical Success Factors PSPs reference as they take principals through the TAIS process is increasing learning time as a practice to impact student achievement. Respondents noted that the first part of deciphering whether learning time needed to be increased or not was to get a gauge of how efficiently time was currently being utilized in the classroom. As PSP A shared, “learning time on Fridays and on test days was horrible. It was just like how do we use this time to benefit kids' learning?” PSP B also brought up how weak transitions were on campus as she noted her frustration,

> Seeing kids packed up with their backpacks on by the door, waiting to go to specials or lunch, or wherever, drives me crazy. Because if you say to teachers, "What do you need more of?" they say, "Time." And then I see poor use of time. So almost every school I work at, we do some reflection about how are we using time?

PSPs agreed that analysis of time on task when conducting walks was critical. Looking at what the students are actually doing in the classroom became the focus of most walks. Posing questions to teachers regarding the level of the task is more helpful than just spouting terms like “bell to bell instruction”. Principal A shared that she and her PSP developed a mini action plan and agenda in conjunction with teachers to model for them what “bell to bell” actually looked like.

PSP B also brought up how exhausting the IR campus life was and suggested a novel idea as they shared,

> Because initially with schools, they increase learning time. What they think about is pull in, push out, Saturday school, tutorials, it's all about tutoring. And then you go, everybody's worn out, they're working morning, noon, and night. They're coming on the weekends, they're staying late everyday, they're coming early, and then you go see

> original instruction and it's mediocre at best. So I talk to them, like, "I know you're doing all this tutoring because you feel this sense of urgency and you feel like you have to do that. But what would it look like if you didn't?" And if our original teach is not as strong, because we're so worn out, then we're missing that opportunity. So helping schools, because sometimes if I say, "What if you didn't do that?" you just see this giant relief come over them.

Clearly this sentiment of "how much more can you do to get out of the hole" is common in districts with IR campuses. School boards and district offices often feel you are not doing enough if you just stick to the normal school day hours. As noted by other respondents, the highest yield teaching has to occur in tier one instruction and this cannot happen if everyone is sprinting all the time.

In regards to increasing teacher-learning time, most interviewees cited the use of PLCs as the venue to support increasing teacher capacity. Designating specific times during the day, to avoid meeting after school, Principal A developed tight agendas that were focused on teacher needs. PSP C also noted teacher professional development as clear opportunities to increase teacher-learning time. She emphasized how important it was to plan for professional development just like you expect a teacher to plan for a classroom lesson. She noted, "What is it you expect them to know and be able to do after the professional development? If you thought it really went well, how would you define what happened if it went well? Thinking about adult learning as well as student learning."

Tracking student data. All PSPs spoke to working with principals to develop mechanisms and practices for tracking student data to impact academic performance. Creating data rooms where every single student was tracked was a practice found on all of the campuses. Looking at individual reading and math levels and having meetings with teachers to track progress, PSPs shared that they were often present to support administration during these

meetings. Principal A brought up that some of her colleagues did not understand the value that a data room brought as she shared,

> I've heard principals say "we don't need a data room to know where our kids are." It's not about that you know where your kids are, it's about keeping the data in your head, and keeping it on the table. Because if it's not up, there's times that it'll get swept away. So teachers knew that data was important, 'cause we had the data room, we talked about data. Any time they came to me for a one-on-one, we had one-on-one data meetings after assessments. They sat with me face-to-face and we talked about each kid and what your plan was based on data. And that all came from the help from the PSPs.

Having the tools and common frames of reference for how to talk to teachers about the student data was what principals found so helpful. Having conversations around data became easier because everyone had deep understandings of the focus and purpose for tracking student data.

Campus B discussed the use of individual student data folders as a practice to impact student achievement. Students were not only trained to track their own data, but they were also able to clearly explain about what their deficits were and why. Helping students identify their strengths and areas of growth was pivotal in the improvement growth model. Students communicating with teachers on a deeper level left them with a sense of ownership on their personal learning journey.

Leadership response to data. Evident in the data gathered by respondents was the piece that, according to PSP C, many schools miss, how data is utilized and carried forward after it is collected. Whether it is data walls, student data trackers, or data collected during teacher observations, how are campus leaders trained to respond to the mounds of data that can pile up around them? As PSP A noted, once they supported a campus and trained the team on how to look at and interpret the data the focus, then, was in the follow up,

> What are we gonna do with this data? How are we going to address this so the kids are going to be okay? A lot of times it's talking to the principal when they were creating their agenda on what they were going to do. What is your agenda? What are you gonna do?

> How are you gonna present it? What questions are you gonna ask? How do you want them to reflect on this? Are you gonna have a timeline? Come up with a plan for that campus, then I went back, then we'd see if it was in play and what things were okay.

PSP C focused her campuses on breaking down the data to identify which specific teachers needed the most support and how the team was going to respond. She notes, "We just look at the data as data. You can't really say it's good or bad. Then you define how do you make it go up. Data has no value unless you have a response plan."

Finally, Principal B pointed out that she utilized her PSPs to improve teacher quality by utilizing their experience to take the data and initiate change. She focused on pieces of sustainability and capitalized on the outside perspective of PSPs by asking what other leaders were doing to continuously improve and show growth to truly impact teacher quality.

Teacher Quality

Teacher knowledge & skills. When dealing with campus accountability issues, teacher quality and the skill set to take all students to the next level to show progress is of the highest importance. PSP B sets the stage for why Campus B struggled to move students.

> What happened at Campus B is they had a really strong third grade team, and they were crackerjacks at interventions. Then those kids moved to fourth grade, and it wasn't that it was a bad group of teachers, but they had someone go out on maternity leave and they had a novice teacher. So what they later realized is they didn't intervene with the high performing kids, and much of the stuff that those kids were doing while the teachers were intervening with the lower performing kids, were non-academic tasks. So those teachers did not have the skill set to take students to the next level.

All six of the respondents reiterated the importance of investing in the ongoing development of building teacher capacity. As PSP C stated, "just making sure that the instruction was on point. Having a good way to monitor classroom learning. Identifying which teacher was having difficulty, to help them out. Help a teacher get better, or help them get out." Campus leaders referenced utilizing the skill set of an experienced PSP when working to document struggling

teachers. The two more novice principals really relied on the PSPs to support them as they gauged and established common expectations and developed a calibration amongst the leadership team in regards to how they each viewed quality teaching.

On the contrary, Principal B was an experienced leader that knew more of what to look for on her own, but still appreciated the validation that the PSPs could provide. Noting, “sometimes you just need that validation piece, because sometimes in the building, you walk through and people are like, "Oh, they're doing such a great job decorating their room." And you're like, "Oh, but there was no engagement, alignment, or rigor." Due to the nature of PSP work, principals shared how they appreciated that their partners could be that critical lens that provided a varied perspective due to all of the districts and campuses they had served. As Principal A pointed out frankly, sometimes your best teacher may just be mediocre on another campus. Having another person there to validate or invalidate your beliefs is priceless.

Leadership walk throughs & teacher feedback. Overwhelming all six respondents cited, time and time again, the importance of data based observations as they walked classrooms together to get a clearer picture of instruction beyond lesson plans and PLCs. PSP A cited classroom walk throughs as number one on her list every time she visited the campus and insisted that the principal walk with her as well. PSP B echoed the necessity to engage in walks, noting that the classrooms were the only place to see where the work was or was not happening. Following the TAIS process, all PSPs agreed that the focus and the tool used to gather observation data had to be linked to the TIP.

Working to develop capacity of the entire leadership team, the data also revealed the value in the walks that occurred during the debrief right after they walked outside of the classroom. As Principal A notes,

> The PSPs did a great job of walking the campus with me. There are some PSPs who don't do that, but they did. The biggest piece is going into the classrooms, kind of watching, and then coming out, and those questioning strategies that they would have for you whenever, in the hallway. Those hallway conversations. "What would you say? How did you think that went? What are you going to say to this teacher the next time you meet with them?" So it's those kind of conversations that we had that allowed me to really view teacher quality, whether it was moving this lower teacher up to proficient, or moving those proficient teachers up to the mastery.

The principals unanimously agreed that the coaching support their PSPs were able to provide them, as they critically questioned what was seen and what was needed next to implement change, was essential and appreciated. Each discussed how easy it was to do the walks, but that the true value was found when the feedback was immediately given to the teacher. Often the most difficult part of leadership is having those crucial conversations with teachers and, as PSP B noted, "often in schools, we're nice to each other. And nice is better than not nice, but if I go in and say things like, "Oh, I really like ... " that doesn't really matter." Principals all shared that their PSPs helped them develop a skill for how to use the data to guide them as they presented non-judgmental, fact based observations to teachers. Principals also felt that their teams developed as a cohesive unit holding each other accountable to providing consistent feedback to teachers.

Focus

Targeted Improvement Plan/Goals. As part of the TAIS process, all respondents noted the critical role the Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) played in having a clear focus. PSP B reflected on why Campus B failed to meet accountability, specifically saying they did not ensure all students were making progress. Unfortunately, the campus failed to intervene with the higher performing students and, although they maintained, they did not show growth from year to year. She clarified how focused they went into year two,

> So we wrote a targeted improvement plan making sure that we moved every single kid, and they came right out of IR. And they learned to use data in ways that they hadn't before, because they were always sort of a "we're okay" campus. And we knew how to tutor these low kids and get them over the bar, and we don't have to do all this stuff, what these other campuses do.

Principal C came onto her campus and discovered that, though the TIP existed, no one had even touched it. No progress had been made on any of the goals and the teachers were not aware that the TIP was their guiding document. Working in conjunction with the PSP, she noted that she set out to improve writing by "focusing on only three things; and we did stay focused on those. It was a lot posting of objectives and writing across the curriculum. We made the largest gain in the district in writing, going from 50% to 64%." This clear focus supported her campus as they moved out of IR the subsequent year.

Several of the pairs referenced looking at the TIP often and ensuring that all agendas and data walks aligned to it. Conversations in leadership meetings were guided by the TIP and, often, teams found themselves readjusting the plan. PSP A noted, "I think after the second year the TIP really became a living document. We just knew where we had to be." Used as more than just a document to stay in compliance, all interviewees needed the TIP to remain focused and move their campus to the next level.

***Whole School Reform/Accountability*.** Navigating an IR campus toward immediate improvement does not allow for time to stop and reflect on whole school reform in regards to accountability. As PSP C notes,

> It's kind of a double-edged sword. Because you have to get your three, four, five up at that moment. The testers have to go up in that moment. It's kind of like in a middle school, I don't go into sixth and seventh grade social studies. We have to get this done. But, you can't forget about the support, or you'll never get out of the cycle. It takes the courage to make sure, to take care of your Pre-K, K, and one. At the same time hyper focusing on three, four, five.

All three pairs noted how easy it is to get sucked into the "tested grades vacuum" and to forget about the primary grades. PSPs provided a big picture look at cyclical trends through the lens of accountability, and did not allow that to occur with the principals they worked with. Principal C noted that her PSP always brought up vertical teams, specifically honing in on how they could support the 4th grade writing scores. Stressing that writing does not start in 4th grade, she encouraged her to look deeply at her plan and hold all grade levels accountable for supporting the campus mission. All classrooms were visited to ensure that new learning in writing was consistently taking place.

PSPs instilled in their principals that accountability is not just a 3-5 problem, but rather, a whole campus concern. Making sure principals keep their finger on the pulse of all grade levels is of the utmost importance, even when time is stretched to make changes quickly. PSP A went further and acknowledged the trend of moving marginal teachers from tested grades to primary ones and warned of the long-term effects this could have for years to come.

> There was one principal that kept trying to keep me away from those primary rooms. He was like no, and I said I have to go in there because how do we know what's happening? I said you don't know what's happening in the lower grades you are never going to see sustained academic achievement. Your best teachers should be in first, second, third grade. Instead, what do we do, we put the worst teachers on the babies. It's way too early in their future to be getting exposed to poor teaching.

By having a clear and focused plan that addresses whole school reform, IR campuses can overcome their IR status and see improvements for years to come. Campus leaders can build capacity within their walls by understanding that a few concise and targeted changes implemented in every classroom, every day.

Sustainability

Lack of Systems/Building Program Coherence. In order to assimilate and sustain

programs, all three PSPs spoke to supporting principals as they set to establish and maintain campus systems. PSP B relayed that often times at struggling campuses, “the school has sort of unraveled, there's often really hard working people there, it's not that they're not really trying, but they don't have systems. So how do you respond to this or that?” This understanding of hard working people all moving in different directions is a common characteristic of IR campuses. Setting up clear and cohesive ways of implementing all campus programs is critical to overcoming the accountability hurdle. As Principal B referenced her PSP supporting her in building coherence, she said she had difficulty helping her staff understand that even if huge gains were not made, they had to focus on progress, and sustaining that progress.

Weighing heavily on all interviewees was the pressure of implementing systems and building coherence on IR campuses within tight time constraints. Principal A gave a clear example of how difficult implementation was,

> You have to have a whole campus writing plan. It's got to start, and it's going to take a couple of years to implement it. But unfortunately, districts don't get it. And it's not like they don't understand it, I just think there's pressures coming from everywhere. If this person didn't fix it, get rid of him, put somebody else in, and that that's what leads to campus and leadership turnover. When in actuality, some of these people are putting in really strong systems and processes in place, and that's the backbone of fixing the campus.

Creating, training, and maintaining systems within a school improvement framework is a difficult and daunting task. PSPs encouraged the principals to focus on building a guiding coalition to support capacity building. PSP C noted that she knew they were going to move the data in incremental stages and said to district staff when she was leaving, "I'm telling you right now, the things we are putting into place, you're not going to see an effect until a couple years down the road.”

Commitment to the Work/Continuous Improvement. Reflecting on moving the school

forward after navigating the IR status, all six participants cited the importance of keeping committed to continuous improvement. PSP A notes the difficulty of keeping a campus in a state of focused urgency once you are in your first year out of IR,

> I mean, that first year, boom. They were out. It was the principal's personality that we start the new year fresh and it's like IR's all been erased in our mind. I asked her to bring it back and say okay, remember, this is what you have to do. Remember why you did this. Just give it your all. Doesn't it matter when you get back on? You have to keep working for continuous improvement, you don't want to go back IR.

Campuses that have overcome the demands that IR places on personnel, systems, and climate learn to deeply understand the work and are, no doubt, committed. Unfortunately, a principal can be proud of all that their staff has accomplished, think that enough has been done, and easily fall into complacency. Principal C points out "you see how hard everybody is working and you don't want to discredit what has been done. But I have to keep pushing my teachers to understand it's about continuing to always move forward."

All principals noted that the PSPs encouraged them to review instruments again and again, and to revise them along the way. As Principal B states,

> My PSP urged that it's okay to keep building the plane while you're flying it and tweak things a little bit. Because it's about continuous school improvement. I think, people forget the word continuous. You can't ever let up. Because in this day and age, there's always gonna be something that you think you got it, and then there's something else they throw at you. And you're like, 'Really? Next thing you're going to want them to do it all in two languages. Next thing you're going to want them to do it in sign language.'

In order to accomplish sustainable gains in student achievement over the years, campus leaders must hone in on building and sustaining systems that drive the campus to continuous improvement. Even after success has been attained, a level of passion for the work must permeate throughout the campus.

Summary

This study sought to examine the impact of the PSP on building leadership capacity and impacting student achievement on elementary IR campuses. Through the data obtained from interviews, and associated documents, it was revealed that principals working with PSPs were able to build their capacity for instructional leadership by developing their understanding of teacher quality and developing systems for sustained change. PSPs utilized collaboration techniques with principals to provide differentiated support through cognitive coaching strategies and self-reflection. Organizing efforts for continuous improvement, the pairs shared whole school practices that shaped the work they monitored constantly.

Climate, trust, and the relational impact of the PSP were discussed alongside the pivotal role the district plays in overcoming accountability concerns. Participants all described how important the impressions of the PSP were in regards to reputation and initial perception. At the end of the process, principals expressed how influential the coaching was not only during the time of the external support, but also in their current practices.

Ultimately, PSPs and principals alike agreed that maintaining focus on the end goal of achieving academic success was the top priority. In order to reach that goal, a campus's systems, climate, and instructional practices must be reviewed and then, based on campus need, a plan must be created. Once a plan is in place, it requires constant review and reflection to insure goals are being met and developed further, as needed. Keeping in mind the importance of whole school accountability, once all staff members are prepared to make necessary changes, the goal will be reached.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter builds on the previous chapter to discuss the collected findings, provide implications, and suggest further recommendations for future research. With the current landscape of school accountability about to change again to a new rating system, it is imperative to further develop these results to support chronically low performing campuses that are still struggling to overcome academic deficits. Working with campus principals, PSPs are able to strengthen school building capacity to promote teaching and learning as emphasized by the results of this study (Datnow & Honig, 2008).

Summary of Study

The aim of the present study was to bring to light the role of the PSP on building leadership capacity within the walls of IR campuses through the perceptions of PSPs and principals that worked together during the TAIS process. Based on the findings of this study, the research goal of understanding the critical role the PSP can play as an external school-based coach to provide a multitude of new resources beyond the scope of what districts and campuses could do on their own has been accomplished (Elmore & Burney, 1997; Mayer et al., 2013; Neufield & Roper, 2002). This study investigated the ways in which accountability could be impacted in relation to two main research questions:

1. How and in what ways do principal and PSP relationships impact school-wide capacity building?
2. Given the principal-PSP relationship, to what extent was student achievement impacted?

Using an inquiry strategy throughout data collection and analysis, this research was grounded in a multiple-case qualitative study of elementary principals and PSPs on three different IR campuses within the same district. The specific interest was examining the phenomenon of principal coaching through the lens of external support systems as perspectives from both PSPs and principals yielded descriptive accounts of how specific PSP practices affected capacity building and practices of the principal within the context of working at an IR campus (Stake, 2006).

Understanding that the role of the campus principal is an isolated one, external coaches, in this case PSPs, provide the keys to establishing external partnerships to support teaching and learning improvement efforts (Honig, 2004). Several findings emerged from the data of this study that support the fact that effective leadership is impossible when everything is a high priority (Duke, 2010). PSPs were able to provide principals with that focus as they built the internal capacity to leverage effective practices within a framework for improving student performance at low performing campuses.

The following section highlights the findings of the investigation within the context of the research questions. Discussed are the extent to which the data answered each research question and how the results are aligned with, or contradict the, literature discussed in chapter two.

Discussion of Findings

Cultivating a strategy for school improvement and professional development, this study's findings support the literature that exists in regards to leadership coaching to impact school wide capacity building and overall student achievement (Elmore & Burney, 1997; King & Bouchard, 2011; Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2010; Neufield & Roper, 2002, 2003). Serving as external liaisons to schools, PSPs are able to provide campus wide support to impact accountability. Although Neufeld and Donaldson (2012) note the lack of research on leadership coaching from an external source to improve best practices for cultivating skills and equipping novice and veteran principals for the challenges of turning around low-performing schools, the following findings add to the existing literature on building a framework for school capacity.

Research Question 1: How and in what ways do principal and PSP relationships impact school-wide capacity building?

The relationship fostered between the PSP and principal has the potential to provide site-based leadership coaching needed to provide long overdue job-embedded, relevant professional development to build and grow school leaders (Kouzes & Pozner, 2007). PSPs skill sets and their ability to build and develop trusting relationships with principals, staff, and district personnel impact the overall school climate in ways that could bolster or impede the improvement process (Datnow & Honig, 2008). With a myriad of internal and external factors, the following themes support the idea that the relationship of the PSP and the principal have a direct impact on school-wide capacity building.

Growth of school leaders. A main focus of a PSP should be to instill change that will last beyond the time they spend at a campus. In order to accomplish this, they must look beyond the principal and build the capacity of an entire leadership team by promoting strategies that promote organizational learning to build school capacity (Apple, 2006). While different

campuses will have different needs, and will require different levels of support, in the end, all of the campuses need sustained changes.

The participants in the study all agreed that teachers should constantly be growing their skillset and cited professional development as the pathway. In line with Youngs and King (2002), all dimensions of capacity building can be directly impacted by professional development. Leadership teams often face the difficulty of planning sessions that prove highly effective. Feedback from the research showed classroom walkthroughs as the most beneficial form of professional development. More than just the observation, the discussion that followed, was full of reflective questioning. Engaging in this reflection, PSPs coach leadership teams to develop their own personal skill set and capacity that will then, in turn, foster organizational capacity (Dimmock, 2012).

Impressions of PSP. A PSPs reputation is imperative to their success in the field of school improvement. By proving successful on IR campuses, a PSP will be sought out to bring their experience to a new campus. However, a concern mentioned by all PSPs included in the study was a lack of training. Without standardized guidance, the novice PSP felt she had no direction, which limited her ability to improve the quality of the principal's leadership. On the other hand, veteran PSPs took it upon themselves to make sure they stayed abreast of current happenings in education. Acknowledging the need for continuous learning, which comes with experience, allowed these PSPs to bring relevant, timely, and effective strategies to the principal. As noted by King and Bouchard (2011), the quality of leadership, in this case, the PSPs, can greatly impact capacity building in positive or negative ways. If PSPs are equipped with the skills they need they can incorporate their knowledge base into organizational structures to support the work of school improvement (Honig & Ikemoto, 2008).

Once a PSP is assigned to a campus, the leadership team is able to leverage this position, which many educators know very little about, to enact change on their campus. Gauging what is needed on a campus, a PSP can either be introduced with an explanation of their role for the campus to calm fears, or they can be declared a visitor from TEA to insure the staff comprehends the weight of the situation.

Relational impact. School climate is one of the first things that must be addressed when a principal begins working with a PSP. Contributing to the learning environment, school climate is fundamental to student achievement and teacher morale (Nomura, 1999). Once a school is labeled IR, negative emotions will run high for anyone invested in the system. Too many negative emotions will lead to a decline of systems across the board. However, if the leader allows teachers to express their feelings about how a campus is functioning, and validates their concerns, an immediate base of trust is established and a school can begin to move forward. Without forming a level of trust, with all involved in the push for campus wide improvement, progress will be seriously impeded, if not completely stalled.

Another relationship that relies on a foundation of trust is the PSP-principal connection. Due to the importance of the work done by this pair in a short amount of time, it is crucial that an open, honest connection is established from the beginning and the pairings must be thoughtful. To truly impact instructional leadership capacity, districts must sometimes, such as the case with PSPs, look beyond their walls to find the perfect fit (Warren & Kelsen, 2013).

External factors. A district becomes highly invested in a school once they have been labeled IR and begins to search for an immediate solution. However, if a district does not take time to analyze campus needs, they may actually end up creating additional hurdles to overcome. Districts must support operational flexibility and give the campus the opportunity to make the

necessary shifts in all areas to meet the demands of school improvement under a compelled sense of urgency (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). As the overseer for change, the district must support the IR campus in its lone pursuit of increased academic performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Furthermore, when a district is doing more harm than good to a campus, the PSP must decide if they should intervene on behalf of the principal. As Honig and Ikemoto (2008) note, PSPs are able to serve as third parties to navigate the challenging work of school improvement. Acting as a liaison between district and campus personnel, PSPs are allowed to cross the insider outsider boundary as they build trust with all stakeholders (Mayer et al, 2013).

Research Question 2: Given the principal-PSP relationship, to what extent was student achievement impacted?

Cooperatively supporting principals through the continuous improvement cycle, PSPs establish professional relationships that provide leaders with objective information in order to make sound decisions that will lead to not only creating, but also sustaining systemic processes and practices, thus increasing student achievement (Bloom et al., 2005; Killion, 2002; Reiss, 2007). Focusing on the work at hand with targeted development plans, the following themes support the work of PSPs to maximize the strengths of the entire campus to positively impact student performance (Meddaugh, 2014).

Data Practices. Interviewees all cited the importance of time on task to increase student achievement. Many relayed that, often times, teachers complain about the lack of time but lack awareness for how much time they are actually wasting on non-academic tasks. PSPs supported principals as they worked to get a gauge for a loss of instructional time in classrooms. Providing

students with authentic opportunities to learn, teachers must plan thoughtful lessons and enrichment activities that are focused on the level of the task with rigor (Lezotte, 1979). Attention must be paid to not just increasing time for the sake of it, but to ensuring that time is filled with engaging minutes (Jez & Wassmer, 2011).

Respondents overwhelming discussed tracking individual student data to increase academic performance. Working collaboratively, PSPs encouraged the use of data rooms and students tracking their own data with individual folders. Understanding the guiding principle of measuring pupil progress, campuses kept data at the forefront of conversations with teachers and students (Edmonds, 1981).

Teacher quality. Paramount to impacting achievement is teacher knowledge and skills and, more importantly, how to develop them when they are not being effective in the classroom (Youngs and King, 2002). Understanding that there is a specific skill set when working with students at IR campuses, principals shared that PSPs were able to guide them as they sometimes had to support marginal teachers that lacked competence in instruction and pedagogy. All also concurred that classrooms must be focused on high expectations to truly influence student growth (King & Bouchard, 2011).

As the classroom is the best gauge of what is occurring on a campus, walk throughs were cited by all three campuses as the most effective way to truly understand what was or was not happening to impact student growth. PSPs helped principals understand that teacher feedback, and responding to the data, were pivotal to move the needle. Focusing specifically on how teacher feedback data would be used and communicated was echoed in earlier research (Hamilton et al, 2009).

Focus. PSPs relayed, throughout their interviews, the importance of having a clear, concise, and focused plan of action to move a campus out of IR. Principals and PSPs worked to conduct a needs assessment to identify strategies, interventions, and goals to support the turnaround process as they created the Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP). Similar to Edmonds' (1982) work in schools, the PSPs were then able to specifically target and provide support to administration in areas of noted deficit.

Also shared was the realization that, though the 3-5 grade staff may have been in on conversations around the TIP and accountability, much of the rest of the staff was unaware that a TIP even existed. Understanding that whole school reform and accountability was necessary to truly enact and sustain change over time, the PSPs supported principals as they shared objectives, plans, and goals with all stakeholders to increase transparency (Smith et al., 2001).

Sustainability. As respondents noted, the whole campus has to come to terms with the IR status and assume responsibility in order to execute a plan to move forward. PSPs exposed principals and campuses to organizational change processes and worked to position and impact them to move beyond mere accountability requirements by establishing embedded and long-lasting systemic change. D'Aveni (1994) supports the idea of the PSP as an external support system noting, without the aid of an intermediary or expert, "very few organizations can develop and master the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed" (p. 383).

Principals shared how difficult it was to create an atmosphere focused on progress and continuous improvement while feeling the pressure of IR. PSPs were able to help them see the importance of celebrating successes and understanding that change takes time. PSPs have the opportunity to build the capacity of campus and district leaders for understanding and fully implementing the continuous improvement model of school turnaround. Working in tandem, the

pairs were able to create program coherence that was assimilated and sustained into school culture leading to increased achievement (Youngs & King, 2002).

Implications for Research

Accountability demands are about to shift again as the state prepares for "the reduction of school quality to a single mark through the A-F school rating systems" (Tanner, 2016, p.1). Further exacerbating the strain felt by low performing campuses, they will now be assigned a grade that will signal a familiar level of quality that makes it nearly impossible to escape scrutiny. Organizational school capacity must be addressed in schools that find themselves at the mercy of the achievement gap (Chenowith, 2007). Campuses that have shown the sustainability to perform at a high level capitalize on building capacity and creating a culture of shared beliefs and expectations focused on student learning and achievement (Peterson, 2002; Platt et al., 2008). The realization for low performing, IR campuses is that under this increased pressure "school reformers must employ external, school-based coaches to support learning, performance, and change among, principals, staff, and teachers' (Mayer, Grenier, Warhol, & Donaldson, 2013, p.338). The role of the PSP, addressed in this paper offers a promising look at the specialized support experienced external professionals can provide to build capacity to promote teaching and learning (Datnow & Honig, 2008).

Framework for School Capacity with External Support

Youngs and King's (2002), school capacity framework served as the theoretical model for this study. As reviewed in chapter two, student achievement is most directly affected by instructional quality which, in turn, is influenced by school capacity. The model then goes on to expand to include five dimensions of school capacity that each affects one or more of the other

dimensions. The implications for research of this study build on the Youngs and King (2002) framework, as it introduces the external support provider, or PSP. The original framework was aligned with responses collected during research to identify whether or not the study supported this method for building capacity. Based on the findings of this study, the adaptations to the model were made to create Figure 5.1.

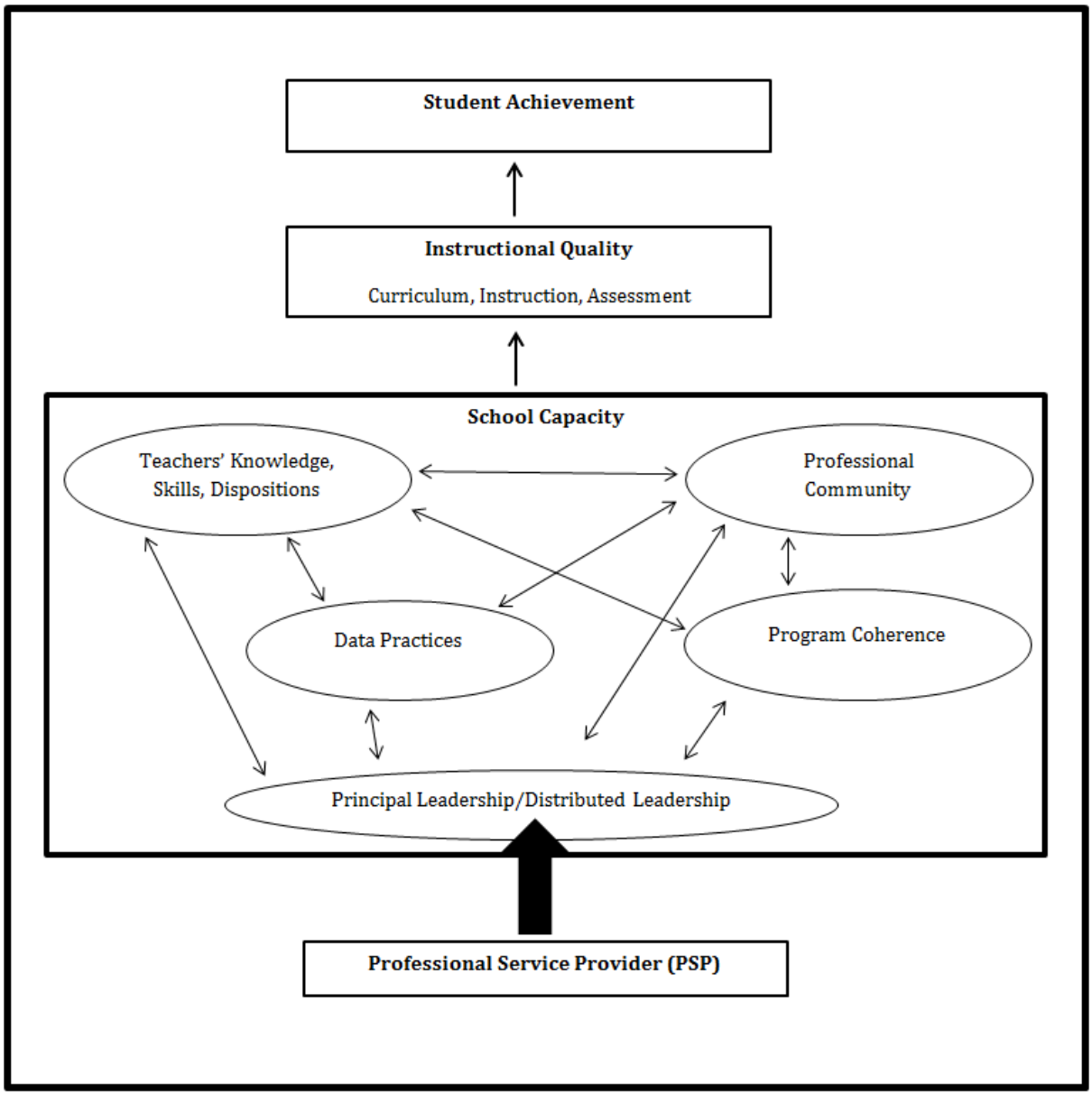

Figure 4. **Framework for School Capacity with External Support**

The PSP is placed at the base of figure 5.1, as the relationship between the PSP and principal was the focus of the study. Having a direct impact on principal leadership, which affects all aspects of school capacity, the results of the study were confirmed. Existing literature that states when coaches are given the responsibility of being the main conduit in the reform process they are integral to organizational change supports the addition of the PSP to the framework (Honig & Ikemoto, 2008). Through the work of the PSP-principal pairs on the studied campuses, each collectively impacted all five dimensions found within the updated school capacity framework. One major revision to the dimensions was made based on the fact that participant responses did not support keeping the original dimension of "technical resources" found in the Youngs and King (2002) model. The amount of evidence uncovered was not enough to validate keeping the dimension in the updated model. In its place, "data practices" was added as it was found to be one of the eight core theme in this study that did not align with any of the other dimensions presented in the original framework.

Implications for Practice

This study's findings have implications for each component of the updated theoretical framework that includes external support being directly connected to leadership. It is necessary, therefore, to discuss how each element builds effective leadership that aids a school in the turnaround process by building capacity to positively impact student achievement.

Create a coaching environment. To truly affect leadership on a campus, PSPs in this study noted the importance of acting as a coach, not as the leader of the campus. Through coaching, PSPs have the opportunity to provide principals and their leadership teams with on-site, job-embedded, relevant professional development (Huggins et al., 2017). Knowing that all

schools will require different levels of support, a PSP conducts a thorough needs assessment to assess specific strengths and areas of growth for the entire leadership team. It is imperative to utilize the findings of the needs assessment to differentiate the interventions to support principals. Principals must be afforded the same opportunities as teachers to cultivate their skill set with an individualized action plan (Dimmock, 2012).

Building honest, trustworthy relationships soon after the first meeting may be difficult, but is imperative to the success of the coaching model. All principal-PSP pairs in this study described how rapport developed between them was the linchpin for the entire coaching process. Once a level of trust was developed, pairs were able to ask tough questions and have difficult conversations with a level of productivity that sparked growth.

Utilizing cognitive coaching strategies, PSPs can assist leaders as they think of "outside the box" alternatives and solutions to impact student achievement. Leaders are forced to take the time to reflect on the "why" something is happening instead of just the "what". Principals cited this step in the coaching process as one of the most important pieces. Whether the principal reflected with their team, themselves, or the PSP, the constant review of systems, strategies, and decisions made provided the principal time to determine overall effectiveness.

Enact lasting organizational reform. When arriving at a campus that has recently been labeled as IR, PSPs expect a negative atmosphere. Due to the amount of time and effort put into instruction, teachers and administration alike will often be filled with a sense of despair. The PSP must immediately begin work with the principal to address the climate and culture, as they are fundamental to student achievement and teacher morale. Allowing all stakeholders to express their feelings about the current state of practice will allow for a sense of validation. Only when this has occurred can a campus move forward.

Identifying and prioritizing initiatives, PSPs in the study helped principals understand that enacting change was about more than just an accountability rating. By focusing on just accountability, the scope becomes too narrow and limits the amount of progress that can be made. For sustained change to become a reality the entire campus had to be committed to incremental, continuous improvement.

Principals in this study shared their experiences of arriving at campuses in complete disarray, without any notable systems in place. While implementing new systems is challenging, and can be met with resistance, it is imperative to building program coherence.

Establish collective responsibility through a Targeted Improvement Plan. Based on the needs assessment conducted on arrival, a targeted improvement plan (TIP) must be created with the leadership team, campus, and district representatives. Using streamlined, focused goals to address the areas of accountability, the PSP urges the leadership team to keep the TIP at the forefront of all campus operations. Noting that a campus may have several areas in need of improvement, the TIP is a tool to insure everyone is moving in the same direction. The clarity provided by the TIP was noted as the overarching instrument that helped campuses eliminate the low performing status.

The PSP can support whole school reform by ensuring that TIP goals are created to align with every classroom on campus. Referencing the fact that the quickest solution is to devote a school's time and resources to only tested grades, PSPs explain the danger of constantly falling into the cycles of "improvement required" if the lower grades are not acknowledged. Walking all classrooms for evidence of follow through on campus initiatives will provide teachers with the support they need to improve and help hold them accountable for whole school reform.

Provide feedback to improve teacher quality. Teacher walk through data is critical to improve overall teacher quality on campus. Being in classrooms allows for the clearest view of the true level of instruction occurring on a campus. Utilizing the TIP goals to guide them, a walk through tool must be created and refined to analyze rigor, alignment, and student engagement. Using data collected on these learning walks, PSPs are able to help principals develop rich professional development based on teacher need, and designed to improve teacher quality.

Principals must engage in timely and specific feedback to impact teacher growth. Using their level of experience, PSPs are able to support principals as they engage in data-based conversations centered around classroom instruction with teachers. Remembering to focus on only a few areas at a time, a principal can lead a more targeted approach that will support building teacher capacity.

Implement systems to make decisions based on data. Principals and PSPs both relied heavily on student data tracking to impact growth for all students. Using data walls, conversations for moving students were at the center of PLCs. Although principals had not always agreed with the use of data, and relied heavily on teacher input, PSPs pushed this practice as it helped everyone keep accountability at the forefront of their thinking. At the end of the day, school ratings are based completely on data so leadership teams must make certain this is a school wide focus.

This study emphasized the importance of training leaders to act on data. Capitalizing on growth, data can be used as a tool to measure teacher quality to impact student achievement. Responding to concerns with reflective questioning, timelines, and a plan for action, data cannot merely stand alone. Simply put, data as just data is simply numbers; however, data with a plan is the game changer for achieving academic success.

Recruit and train skilled PSPs. With the accountability system constantly evolving, a campus that has fallen into improvement required status will not be able to experience true change without the help of an external source. PSPs are able to influence every facet of the theoretical framework by building the capacity of the leadership team. Since their scope of influence is so wide, education and experience must be considered when selecting the campus PSP.

When reviewing the role of the PSP in the current study, all principals agreed their job would have been much more difficult, if not impossible, without the assistance of this coach. Based on findings in this study, this idea relies heavily on the understanding that a PSP, themselves, are equipped with the skills to provide the coaching.

The PSPs cited a lack of proper training to truly prepare them for the work in front of them. As PSPs maintain the skillset they came to the job with, it is worrisome to know there will be little to no development of their abilities.

Recommendations for Future Research

At the end of data analysis and synthesis, a researcher often finds themselves asking new questions about the subject at hand. Whereas the questions this study sought to answer were addressed, new ideas were brought up.

To begin with, the research shows that PSPs were chosen based on experience and reputation. In order to continue the PSP network, new people must be brought in. The training, however, was described as inadequate, leaving PSPs to move a school forward solely with the skills they arrived with. When reviewing the data of a first year PSP, she gave an overarching message that she felt unprepared and unsure of what steps to take. PSPs from this study discussed wanting to create a toolkit to use as professional development to train all members of

the network, new and experienced, but there has yet to be steps taken forward for this. These factors lead to the first set of future research questions:

1. What training can be provided to insure all PSPs are adequately prepared to lead a campus out of their improvement required status?
2. Can the PSP network enact a mentor-mentee system between novice and veteran PSPs? Perhaps employing them in the same district to allow for shadowing experiences?
3. Since novice PSPs will not yet have an established reputation, how can the PSP network help to insure IR schools feel confident selecting them for the job?

Additionally, to further the research, the scope of the study could be expanded. The research conducted was limited to one district and, within that district, only to elementary schools. Although the PSP-principal pairs provided different perspectives, as each set had unique characteristics, the data collected was finite. In the future, a researcher could expand the research questions from this study to focus on secondary schools:

1. How and in what ways do principal and PSP relationships impact school-wide capacity building, specifically at the secondary level?
2. Given the principal-PSP relationship, to what extent was student achievement impacted, specifically at the secondary level?

The study could also be pushed further to include sets of principal-PSP pairs from a variety of districts. When moving this direction, the researcher would be able to delve deeper into the role and accountability of the DCSI on school improvement.

The need to carry this research further is imperative. There has been discussion of PSPs being phased out; however, the findings in the current study show the need for an external

coaching presence on an IR campus is crucial. If this study could be pushed to include improving PSP preparation, as well as discovering the effectiveness of the relationship at the secondary level, perhaps IR campuses will continue to receive a level of support that is needed to achieve the goal of academic success.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Letter Request to Participate

Dear Professional Service Provider:

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as a part of my doctoral degree in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Texas at Austin under the supervision of Dr. Rubén Olivárez. I am requesting your participation as well as the associated principal you worked with on the Improvement Required campus, whom you recommend as able to provide information for this study. This letter provides information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

As you are aware, the role of the campus principal has presented enormous and escalating challenges with the ever-increasing demands of academic accountability coupled with public scrutiny. Improvement required campus principals work with PSPs to navigate the complexities of the turnaround process. Surprisingly, there is little research on how PSPs operate, the impact of their work, and the conditions that help or hinder them and the IR principal they work with. The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate the relationship between the Professional Service Provider and principal on Improvement Required campuses in Texas and how that relationship impacts school-wide capacity building. Furthermore, given the relationship, to what extent was student achievement impacted.

This investigation has significance for all stakeholders involved in the school turnaround process at Improvement Required campuses. As the scope and urgency of turnaround principals has continued to grow more demanding each year, it is imperative to support these leaders as they navigate campuses to improve accountability. This study will have implications on how the PSP model is used to increase leadership capacity of campus principals in order to meet state and federal accountability, ultimately improving education for all students.

If you choose to participate, you will be among two other PSP/principal pairs in Texas that will be included in this study.

District study participation will include:

Professional Service Provider Participation

- Your participation in 2 individual interviews (60 minutes);
- Review of your interview transcript to ensure interview accuracy and validity of the study;
- I am asking participating PSPs to recommend the principal they formerly worked with at the IR campus.

There will be no risks to the district or to any interview participants. Neither you, nor any participant interviewed, nor your school district, will be identified or identifiable in the research in connection with any specific reports or publications. All interviews will be conducted to maintain participant privacy and confidentiality. Participation in interviews will be completely voluntary, and a participant decision about whether or not to participate will not affect any relationship with the University of Texas at Austin or with the school district. All participant data will be de-identified and coded with a pseudonym to protect the district and participants' confidentiality, kept in a secure location during the study, and destroyed after the mandated period for record-keeping.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 512-964-9196 or by e-mail at marisolrocha1@gmail.com. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Rubén Olivárez via e-mail rolivarez@austin.utexas.edu.

The information gathered will assist administrators and leaders in public schools systems to build and increase leadership capacity on campuses across the state of Texas. I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

Marisol Rocha
Hornsby-Dunlap Elementary Principal, Del Valle ISD

Dr. Rubén Olivárez,
L. D. Haskew Centennial Professor in Public School Administration & Executive Director: Cooperative Superintendency Program, University of Texas at Austin

APPENDIX B: Consent Form

Waiver of Consent
Marisol Rocha
The University of Texas at Austin
IRB # 2017-10-0103

Thank you for agreeing to speak to me regarding your possible participation in my research study. Your participation is voluntary. The purpose of this research is to determine the impact that the Professional Service Provider/Principal relationship has on building school-wide capacity. I am seeking Professional Service Providers and principals to provide their perspectives on navigating the Improvement Required process as they undergo school accountability interventions. Following two 60-minute individual interviews, and the sharing of the transcripts with you for your review for credibility, your participation will be complete.

The research study will include:

- Two- 60-minute individual interviews with you to gain your perspective about the work you did in relation to the Texas Accountability Intervention System on the associated IR campus.
- With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.
- All data collected will occur in a private office or school room or a public library to ensure interview privacy and confidentiality based on convenience for you, the participant.
- You will not be identified or identifiable in any reports of this research. For the analysis phase, you will be assigned a code identifier, which will be removed in the final document. Pseudonyms will be used to mask participants' and districts' identities. Therefore, you and your district will not be identified or identifiable.
- All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be kept in a secure location during the study and destroyed after the mandated period for record-keeping. Only researchers associated with this project will have access.
- There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

The results will be disseminated in a variety of formats to enable educators, researchers, and board members the benefit of your experience, knowledge, and expertise regarding school improvement efforts and capacity building. You may benefit from participation in this research through your personal reflection on your experience with the school improvement process. Your fellow community members and educators may benefit from the recommendations that emerge from the results of the study.

Please be aware that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may discontinue participation at any time. Your decision about whether or not to participate will not affect any relationship with the University of Texas at Austin or with the school district. Should you elect not to participate, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please e-mail me at marisolrocha1@gmail.com, or my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Rubén Olivárez at rolivarez@austin.utexas.edu. Any questions about the research can also be directed to the University of Texas at Austin's Office of Research Support at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Participant's Printed Name:_____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C: Interview Guide

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The information gathered from this interview will be used as part of a doctoral dissertation for the University of Texas at Austin. Your responses to questions asked in this interview will be used only for purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Your participation in the interview will serve as your informed consent. The entire interview will last approximately an hour.

Review/Confirm descriptive data:

- Name
- Years as a principal/PSP
- School Name
- Students served
- Student population
- School location
- Size of professional faculty
- Years involved in TAIS process with principal/PSP

1. Looking back on your experience, what were your initial expectations about working with your counterpart in this PSP-principal relationship?

2. Specifically addressing the CSF- Leadership Effectiveness, how did you experience or give coaching and development as you worked together?

3. How has your PSP-principal relationship altered your perception of distributed leadership?

4. What is an example story of how your PSP-principal relationship enabled self-reflection?

5. How did your PSP-principal relationship support your goals in building CSF- Teacher Quality?

6. What PSP support did you give or receive to support teacher quality and enhance overall effectiveness?

7. How did your organization enable coordinated professional development to support teacher knowledge of the IR status and TAIS model as well as Use of Quality Data?

8. How did the PSP-principal relationship enable whole school community to focus on student learning and a collective responsibility to focus on CSF- Academic Performance?

8a. In what ways, if any, was CSF-Increased Learning Time addressed to enhance the school day for students?
8b. In what ways, if any, was CSF-Increased Learning Time addressed to enhance the school day for teachers?

9. What emphasis was placed on CSF- School Climate with staff and the greater school community?
9a. Family and Community Engagement-What follow up and support systems were built in to help parents & community understand the IR campus status?

10. How did you work together to maximize curricula and instructional materials to bolster student achievement?

11. How were standards and assessments analyzed as a result of the PSP-principal relationship impact instructional quality?

12. What role did the vision for the organization focus on building capacity for teachers using assessments and data?

13. What role did your DCSI play in supporting the PSP-principal relationship?

14. How did the relationship help to leverage district personnel throughout the TAIS process?

15. What is your reflection on the work of a PSP in the field?
15a. How was trust built with the principal?
15b. How was trust built with all school community stakeholders?

APPENDIX D: List of Documents Referenced and Examined

1. Campus AEIS (Academic Excellence Indicator System)
2. Campus AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress)
3. Texas Accountabilty Intervention System Handbook
4. Professional Service Provider Handbook
5. Job Descriptions for PSP and DCSI

APPENDIX E: Codes Identified Across Four or More Participants and Numbers of References

Codes Identified	≥ 4 Participants	References
1) Teacher Knowledge & Skills	6	24
2) Climate/ Culture	6	21
3) Initial Perception of PSP	5	13
4) Targeted Improvement Plan/Goals	6	30
5) Increased Student/Adult Learning Time	6	12
6) Whole School Reform/Accountability	6	22
7) Professional Development	4	11
8) Leadership Response to Data	6	30
9) Tracking Student Data	4	15
10) Lack of Systems/Building Program Coherence	4	17
11) Leadership Walk Throughs & Teacher Feedback	6	56
12) Trust/Building Relationships/Fit	6	53
13) Commitment to the Work/Continuous Improvement	6	21
14) Differentiated/Individualized Support to Campuses/Principal	4	12
15) Cognitive Coaching Questioning Strategies	5	19
16) Building Capacity of Leadership Team	6	31
17) Self Reflection	5	8
18) District Commitment /Barriers to Support	6	31
19) PSP as Intermediary	5	11
20) PSP Reputation/ Credibility/Experience	6	29
21) PSP Preparation/ Lack of Professional Development	4	19

APPENDIX F: Core Themes with Associated Codes

Core Themes	Associated Codes
Capacity Building: Growth of School Leaders	• Professional Development • Differentiated/Individualized Support to Campuses/Principal • Cognitive Coaching Questioning Strategies • Building Capacity of Leadership Team • Self Reflection
Capacity Building: Impressions of PSP	• Initial Perception of PSP • PSP Reputation/ Credibility/Experience • PSP Preparation/ Lack of Professional Development
Capacity Building: Relational Impact	• Climate/Culture • Trust/Building Relationships/Fit
Capacity Building: External Factors	• District Commitment /Barriers to Support • PSP as Intermediary
Student Achievement: Practices	• Increased Student/Adult Learning Time • Tracking Student Data
Student Achievement: Teacher Quality	• Teacher Knowledge & Skills • Leadership Walk Throughs & Teacher Feedback • Leadership Response to Data
Student Achievement: Focus	• Targeted Improvement Plan/Goals • Whole School Reform/Accountability
Student Achievement: Sustainability	• Lack of Systems/Building Program Coherence • Commitment to the Work/Continuous Improvement

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